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# THE GREAT TRIBULATION: KEPT “OUT OF” OR “THROUGH”?

DAVID G. WINFREY

*The debate over whether or not the church will enter the great tribulation is focused on a single critical phrase in the Greek text. The question is: does τηρέω ἐκ (“keep from,” KJV) in Rev 3:10 necessarily imply that the church will be kept out of the great tribulation, or does it allow for the church to go through the great tribulation? As the end time fast approaches, it is imperative for the church to settle this issue. Is the Lord’s coming for his church imminent, or will the church soon enter into a period of unprecedented Satanic persecution. In answer to this question, four points are considered: (1) Robert Gundry’s use of John 17:15 as an interpretive guide for Rev 3:10; (2) three antithetical expressions which support the pretribulational view; (3) four complications to Gundry’s posttribulational view; and, (4) an analogy illustrating the difference between the phrases “keep out of” and “deliver out of.”*

\* \* \*

## INTRODUCTION

**I**N the course of the history of the Church, controversies often crystalized around particular phrases and words. When the deity of Christ was challenged in the fourth century, the issue was brought into sharp focus in two Greek words: ὁμοούσιος and ὁμοιούσιος. At the Council of Nicea, Christ was declared to be ὁμοούσιος (of the same substance) with the Father rather than ὁμοιούσιος (of a similar substance) with the Father, as the Arians taught. As can be seen, the only difference between these two words is the letter *iota*. To some it may seem ludicrous to argue over such a “trivial” point. However, although a mere letter distinguished these two Greek words, the matter was by no means insignificant. Whether Christ was co-eternal, co-equal, and co-substantial with the Father or a mere creature, even though of the highest order, was the issue at stake.

Today one of the important issues facing the church is in the area of eschatology. In the nineteenth century, the early premillennial

teaching of the church was rediscovered. Under the leadership of J. N. Darby, the brethren movement (Plymouth Brethren) of the 1830s developed a new and startling variation of premillennialism. Whereas those who are now called "historical premillennialists" taught that Christ's second coming would occur at the end of the great tribulation, these "dispensationalists" taught that God had two separate programs: one for Israel and another for the predominantly gentile church. They taught that Christ's second coming to establish his earthly reign would be preceded by an earlier coming for his church. By being raptured away before the great tribulation, the church would escape the terrible plagues and persecutions depicted in the Apocalypse of Saint John. These two distinct forms of premillennialism are labeled "pretribulationism" and "posttribulationism." Pretribulationists teach that the church will be kept *out of* the great tribulation. Posttribulationists, on the other hand, teach that the church must enter this horrible period of persecution and suffer at the hands of the Antichrist. Only after the church has passed *through* this period will she be caught up to meet the Lord and accompany him in triumph at his second advent.

Posttribulationists have of late put forward telling arguments against several features of the pretribulational scheme. Many of these points were popularized in 1898 by W. E. Blackstone's *Jesus is Coming*.<sup>1</sup> Although several of the texts used to support the pretribulational view have been abandoned by pretribulationists, Rev 3:10 has remained the primary defense of the position. Until recently, it has withstood every argument the posttribulationists have marshaled against it. However, with the publication of Robert Gundry's *The Church and the Tribulation* in 1973, it has once again come under siege.<sup>2</sup>

Gundry's provocative book has caused many pretribulationists to reexamine their position on this issue. Will Christ come for his church *before* the great tribulation (pretribulationism), or will he come *after* the church has entered this time of unparalleled suffering (posttribulationism)? Perhaps the impact of Gundry's book can be measured best by the response it has received from the champions of the pretribulational view. Gundry's treatment of the issue has been reviewed by Charles C. Ryrie in *Bibliotheca Sacra*.<sup>3</sup> In a series of articles in the same journal, John F. Walvoord, president of Dallas

<sup>1</sup>W. E. Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1898).

<sup>2</sup>Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973).

<sup>3</sup>Charles C. Ryrie, "The Church and the Tribulation: A Review," *BSac* 131 (1974) 173-79.

Theological Seminary, has examined Gundry's dispensational post-tribulationism at length.<sup>4</sup> However, whereas Gundry deals with Rev 3:10 extensively in developing his arguments for a posttribulational rapture,<sup>5</sup> Walvoord's rebuttal is rather brief, little more than a page in length.<sup>6</sup>

The most recent article in *Bibliotheca Sacra* examining Gundry's treatment of Rev 3:10 is written by Jeffrey L. Townsend.<sup>7</sup> In it he traces the usage of the preposition ἐκ from the classical period to that of the NT and demonstrates that in addition to the primary meaning of "out from within," ἐκ was also capable of bearing another meaning, i.e., "*a position outside its object with no thought of prior existence within the object or of emergence from the object.*"<sup>8</sup>

If there is a "proof text" for the pretribulational position, it is Rev 3:10. Perhaps this is why Gundry deals with it at such length. Unfortunately, many pretribulationists now consider Rev 3:10 indecisive. It has become a sort of "no-man's-land" in the ongoing debate between both camps. This, in the author's opinion, is a serious mistake. Gundry's rebuttal of the pretribulational position on Revelation must be met head-on. It will not be repelled unless each argument is met by convincing counterarguments.

#### TEXTS

##### *Rev 3:10 (RSV)*

Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will *keep* you *from* [τηρήσω ἐκ] the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell upon the earth.

##### *John 17:15 (RSV)*

I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst *keep* them *from* [τηρήσης . . . ἐκ] the evil one.

#### A FAIR ASSUMPTION

Robert Gundry's treatment of the phrase "keep out of" found in these passages is based on the fair assumption that if the phrase has

<sup>4</sup>John F. Walvoord, "Posttribulationism Today," *BSac* 132 (1975) 16-24. The series runs through *BSac* 134 (1977) 299-313. These articles have been published in book form. See John F. Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

<sup>5</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 54-61.

<sup>6</sup>Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation*, 137-38.

<sup>7</sup>Jeffrey L. Townsend, "The Rapture in Revelation 3:10," *BSac* 137 (1980) 252-66.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 254.

the implication of "previous existence within" in one passage, it most likely also has the same implication in the other.<sup>9</sup> The question to be considered is whether "keep out of" (τηρέω ἐκ) implies "previous existence within" in John 17:15. If it does, then it is reasonable to assume that the same implication would be found in Rev 3:10, for these are the only two occurrences of τηρέω ἐκ in the NT. And if τηρέω ἐκ implies "previous existence within" in Rev 3:10, then, rather than this passage being a proof text for pretribulationism, it would suggest that the church will be in the great tribulation which is here referred to as the "hour of testing." Accordingly, Rev 3:10 would then be interpreted as a promise to keep or guard the church in the great tribulation so that she may emerge victorious at the end.

#### OBJECTIVE

The author's objective is to demonstrate that τηρέω ἐκ implies previous existence *outside* the specified sphere in both passages. In seeking to demonstrate that the phrase does not imply previous existence within in John 17:15, the following terms and phrases which are diametrically opposed to each other will be examined: (1) τηρέω ἐκ and τηρέω ἐν; (2) ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ and ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ; and (3) ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι and ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ. After these considerations, four additional problems with Gundry's interpretation will be examined.

τηρέω ἐκ *versus* τηρέω ἐν

The first reason for rejecting Gundry's interpretation of the phrase "keep out of" as necessarily implying protection within is that John 17:15 says exactly the opposite. It should be noted that Christ doesn't pray "but that thou shouldst *keep* them *in* the evil one." They are not to be protected *within*, but *outside* this sphere. However, the following statement reveals that Gundry understands this phrase in John 17:15 to mean "keep in" rather than "keep out of" and has confused the sphere of the evil one's power with the world.

We cannot eliminate the parallel between the two verses by distinguishing a moral realm in John 17:15 and a physical realm in Revelation 3:10. For it is the physical presence of the disciples in the world *which places them in the moral sphere of the evil one* [Italics added].<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>As Gundry points out: "The parallels between John 17:15 and Revelation 3:10 are very impressive. Both verses appear in Johannine literature. Both come from the lips of Jesus. A probability arises, therefore, of similar usage and meaning" (Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 58).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 59.



Since Gundry conceives the sphere of the evil one's power to be co-extensive with the world, so that to be "in the world" means the same as to be "in the moral sphere of the evil one," it makes little or no difference to him whether Christ has prayed that the disciples should be kept in one or the other. Accordingly, Gundry understands the verse to mean that the disciples are to be kept from harm in the sphere of the evil one's power, the world. But the Lord simply prayed that while being in the world the disciples be kept *from* or *out of* Satan's power. This verse does not say that Christ prayed that the disciples might be preserved *in* the evil one's power, but just the contrary. Because the believers are of God, not of the world, they are enabled to be both *in* the world and yet *out of* the evil one's power.

It must of course be acknowledged that the disciples were once in the evil one's power, but this is totally irrelevant to the issue at hand. The question we are considering is whether the phrase *τηρέω ἐκ* in John 17:15 suggests that the disciples were within Satan's power *when this prayer was uttered*. In discussing the necessary implication of the Greek preposition, the meaning of "previous existence within" must be limited in John 17:15 to the status of the disciples when Christ uttered this prayer. In Rev 3:10 the implication of previous existence within must be limited to the status of the church of Philadelphia when Christ made this promise. The necessary implication of *τηρέω ἐκ* in John 17:15 is that the disciples were already *out of* the evil one's power; in like manner, the necessary implication of *τηρέω ἐκ* in Rev 3:10 is that the church of Philadelphia was already *out of* the hour of temptation. If, on the other hand, our Lord's prayer in John 17:15 had been to *keep* them *in* the evil one's power, then the necessary implication would obviously be that they *were already* in his realm. And likewise, if his promise in Rev 3:10 was to keep the church of Philadelphia *in* the hour of temptation, then she would by implication be informed that *she will be* in this period of time.

That it is not *τηρέω ἐκ* which necessarily implies previous existence within but rather *τηρέω ἐν* ("keep in") can be seen from the four passages in the NT where *τηρέω ἐν/εἰς* occur. What is the necessary implication of *τηρέω ἐν* in Acts 12:5 if not that Peter *was in* prison? He could not be guarded in prison unless he was first in prison. What is the necessary implication of *τηρέω εἰς* in Acts 25:4 if not that Paul *was in* Caesarea? Again, Paul could not have been guarded in Caesarea unless he was first in Caesarea. We find the phrase again in 1 Peter 1:4 where we learn that our inheritance is "reserved in heaven." If it is being *kept* in heaven, it must by implication already *be* in heaven. In Jude 21 we are exhorted to "keep" ourselves "in" the love of God. Here again we find the phrase

τηρέω ἐν. Before we can *keep* ourselves *in* the love of God, we must first *be in* his love.

Now if these passages with τηρέω ἐν are antonymous parallels to those with τηρέω ἐκ, then whatever the necessary implication of one set, the other set must bear the converse implication. If τηρέω ἐν/εἰς in these passages has the obvious implication of "previous existence within," then τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15 and Rev 3:10 must have the implication of "previous existence without." Before one can be *kept in*, one must already *be in*; and before one can be *kept out*, one must already *be out*. This relationship between being "kept in" and being in and between being "kept out" and being out may be illustrated by the following sentences: (1) "Teachers, please *keep* your students *in* the auditorium for the next fifteen minutes," and (2) "Teachers, please *keep* your students *out of* the auditorium until your class is called." In the first sentence, the phrase "keep . . . in" necessarily implies that the students "were in" the auditorium before the announcement was made. To "keep in" necessarily implies "previous existence within." In the second sentence, the phrase "keep . . . out of" necessarily implies that the students "were out of" the auditorium prior to the announcement. To "keep out of" necessarily implies "previous existence without."

ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ *versus* ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ

We have seen that τηρέω ἐκ does not imply previous existence within as does τηρέω ἐν, but just the opposite. The second set of antithetical expressions is found in the Johannine literature: ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ in John 17:15 and ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ in 1 John 5:19.<sup>11</sup> In 1 John 5:19 we read, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world is *in the power of the evil one*" (RSV, italics added).<sup>12</sup> This verse implies unmistakably that the believers *are not* ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ ("in the power of the evil one") as is the rest of mankind. Now if 1 John 5:19 implies

<sup>11</sup>These phrases illustrate the Johannine use of absolute contrasts. Concerning such absolutes, Hodges writes: "Thus one encounters such polarities as 'light and darkness,' 'love and hate,' 'believe and unbelief,' 'from above and from below,' and many others. It is now evident, from the evidence of Qumran, that this dualistic mode of thought was very much at home in the conceptual milieu of first-century Palestine. It would be an error, therefore, not to bring this observation to bear on the passage under consideration" (Zane C. Hodges, "Those Who Have Done Good—John 5:28-29," *BSac* 136 [1979] 163).

<sup>12</sup>The πονηρός of 1 John 5:19 should be rendered "evil one." Buchell writes: "ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ is to be taken personally of the devil (cf. v. 18). The κεῖται ἐν . . . is perhaps par. to the μένειν ἐν ἐμοί of Jn. 15:1-10: As the believer abides in Christ, so that he is nourished and fruitfully sustained by Him, so the world lies in the devil, by whom it is controlled and rendered helpless and powerless, and finally killed (1 Jn. 3:14)" (Friedrich Buchel, "κεῖμαι," *TDNT* 3, 654, n. 3).

that the believers are not in the evil one's power, then how can John 17:15 imply that they are? Neither the Scriptures nor the implications drawn therefrom contradict each other. An honest exegesis of the two phrases in their respective contexts demands the recognition of their sharp contrast. If one is ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, he is not also ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ. He is either *in* or *out of* the evil one's power. On the one hand, the implication of τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15 is that the believers *are out of* the evil one's power. We are expressly told that "the wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18). On the other hand, the implication in 1 John 5:19 is that the unregenerate *is in* the evil one's power.<sup>13</sup>

One's exegetical integrity may well be called in question if, in an effort to avoid the antithetical nature of these two phrases and the argumentation based upon it, he renders ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ in John 17:15 "*in the sphere of* the evil one's power." If the disciples were merely *in the sphere of* the evil one's power, then what of the world of the unregenerate? Are they only *in the sphere of* the evil one's power? Or, are they actually *in* the evil one's power? If the ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ in John 17:15 does not actually suggest that the disciples were *in* (subject to) the evil one's power, but merely that they were *in the sphere of* the evil one's power (i.e., the world of mankind), then does the ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ in 1 John 5:19 suggest that the "whole world" of the unregenerate is, like the disciples, merely *in the sphere of* the evil one's power, i.e., in the world, rather than actually subject to the evil one? If so, the case of the disciples is no different from that of the unregenerate in respect to the power of the evil one. Although both the disciples and the unregenerates are accordingly *in the sphere of* the evil one's power, neither group is actually *in* the evil one's power. In effect, this unwarranted interpolation of "in the sphere of" erases this distinction.

ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι *versus* ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ

The contention that τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15 necessarily implies previous existence within fails to recognize a third set of antithetical expressions which is found in the immediate context. In John 17:11b the Lord prays, "Holy Father keep them in thy name which you have given me." And in John 17:12a he says, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have

<sup>13</sup>In commenting on ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται, Sasse points out that this sharp contrast between the state of the believers and that of the unregenerate is expressed by another set of Johannine absolutes: "As believers in Christ are ἐν χριστῷ, so the unbelieving cosmos is ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, and as Christ is ἐν ὑμῖν, so the ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, ὁ πονηρὸς, the wicked one, is ἐν τῷ κοσμῷ" (Herman Sasse, "κόσμος," *TDNT* 3, 894).

"kept." But in John 17:15 we read, "I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one" (RSV). It should be evident that there is a parallelism between "in the name" and "out of the evil one."<sup>14</sup> These two expressions describe spheres of power that are mutually exclusive. To be "in the name" necessarily means that one is "out of the evil one." One cannot be "in the evil one" and "in the name." The believers, being "out of the evil one" and "in the name," cannot be "in the evil one" without also being "out of the name." To be "kept out of the evil one's power" is the same as to be "kept in the name." As a result "none of them is lost," i.e., perish (v 12). Consequently, to be "in the name" and "out of the evil one" is the same as being "saved," and to be "in the evil one" and therefore "out of the name" is the same as being "lost."

Now if the believers are "in the name" and therefore "out of the evil one," then how can the τηρέω ἐκ of John 17:15 imply that they are "in the evil one"? Those who are "in the evil one" are the lost, not the saved. "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition. . . ." (v 12). Failure on the part of the Lord to "keep" the disciples would be tantamount to them perishing, not undergoing persecution. John 17:15b assures the believers that they will never experience eternal perdition, not that they will be kept or protected from earthly persecutions. We cannot therefore interpret τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15 to mean that the believers are to be protected from harm while in the evil one's power. The phrase τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15 cannot imply previous existence within. This phrase must mean preservation *outside* of the evil one's power in John 17:15 and preservation *outside* of the hour of temptation in Rev 3:10.

#### FOUR PROBLEMS CONSIDERED

Gundry's interpretation of John 17:15 and Rev 3:10 presents the following problems: (1) it results in a contradiction with regard to whether or not the disciples/church may expect divine protection; (2) it deprives the church of Philadelphia of any meaningful word of encouragement; (3) in the light of the unique character of the great tribulation, it will not permit any future fulfillment of Rev 3:10; and

<sup>14</sup>As Riesenfeld points out: "It is evident that there is parallelism between ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι (v. 12) and ἐν τοῦ πονηροῦ (v. 15). Hence ἐν here does not have an instrumental sense but a transferred spatial sense and can be rendered by "in the sphere of power of faith in thy name" as the opposite of the power of evil, which is to be kept at a distance. . . . The same applies in Rev. 3:10, where the transfigured Christ protects His community against (ἐκ) eschatological temptation" (Harald Riesenfeld, "τηρέω," TDNT 8, 142).

(4) it denies that the object of ἐκ denotes that from which the disciple/church is delivered.

#### *A Discrepancy*

The notion that τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 and John 17:15 implies previous existence within must be rejected because this would in effect result in a contradiction between these two verses. In demonstrating this, Gundry's interpretation is summarized as follows: (1) The church saints in Rev 3:10 are the tribulation saints found in the subsequent chapters of Revelation; (2) The promise made in Rev 3:10 is to exempt these saints from the testings of the hour; and, accordingly, (3) The church/tribulation saints will not suffer during this period of time. However, since the Scriptures indicate that the tribulation saints do suffer during this time, Gundry's interpretation flounders at this point. In n. 35, p. 59, Gundry writes, "The Church will suffer the wrath of Satan and the AntiChrist in the form of persecution." According to Gundry, the promise in Rev 3:10 only provides exemption from the plagues that God will send upon those who have the mark of the beast.

As a result of attempting to dismiss the charge of his interpretation of Rev 3:10 being inconsistent with the known fact that the tribulation saints (which he identifies with the church) do indeed suffer the wrath of Satan and the AntiChrist, Gundry has left himself exposed to still another charge. According to his interpretation, the phrase "keep out of the evil one" in John 17:15 means protection from being harmed by Satan while in the sphere of danger. And the phrase "keep you out of the hour of testing" in Rev 3:10 means protection from the events within this period of time. These events, however, from which the church is to be protected are limited by Gundry to the plagues God will inflict upon the ungodly. According to Gundry, Rev 3:10 does *not* promise the church exemption from the persecutions of Satan. So, then, according to his interpretation of John 17:15, the church *will be protected* from "dangers" which are instigated by Satan, but according to his interpretation of Rev 3:10, the church *will not be protected* from such.

#### *An Empty Promise*

Gundry's interpretation of John 17:15 and Rev 3:10 also fails to provide any measure of comfort to the church in this period of trials. If God will protect his saints from the plagues he will inflict upon the ungodly, we may well ask why he doesn't protect them against those persecutions directed at them by Satan. If in fact the church will enter the great tribulation, it would seem that the Lord would provide



something more in the way of protection for the church as she faces the most terrible period of persecution in history. It seems a misuse of language to speak of those who are not divine targets (i.e., the church/tribulation saints) as being "protected" when in fact nothing is actually done to prevent them from suffering at the hands of Satan. It is a mockery to conceive of anyone being "comforted" (and surely that is the intent of the promise in Rev 3:10) by the fact that he is only the target of Satan. If while a believer is in the crosshairs of one sharpshooter (Satan) who fully intends to kill him, he learns that another one (God) promises not to do the same, but will not however protect him from the other, what comfort is there in this? How can one rejoice over this "promise of protection"? What consolation is there in such "protection" if one is left utterly exposed to the "wrath of Satan and the AntiChrist in the form of persecution"? Like the fine print in some insurance policies, Gundry's footnote so limits the promise of protection in Rev 3:10 as to make it meaningless.

### *Lack of Correspondence*

Some expositors today teach that the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 are representative of seven different kinds of churches that have existed throughout the history of the church. However, most premillennialists understand these seven churches to represent seven periods of church history in prophetic outline. This assumes a certain correspondence between the character and experience of the local churches described in these two chapters and that of the universal church throughout its history. It is upon this correspondence that an eschatological interpretation of Rev 3:10 is based. If "the hour of temptation" refers to a period of persecution in the past, then the promise of Rev 3:10, however interpreted, has long been fulfilled. This passage is thereby denied any eschatological significance.

Assuming, however, that each of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 corresponds to a particular period of church history, whatever is said of one of these local churches represents the experience of the universal church in the corresponding period of its history. Whatever *τηρέω ἐκ* implies for the local church of Philadelphia in the first century *must be the same* as what it implies for the universal church. The *τηρέω ἐκ* cannot, on the one hand, imply that the local church of Philadelphia would be kept out of the hour of trial, and on the other hand, imply that the universal church would enter into the great tribulation and emerge victorious at its end. If the *τηρέω ἐκ* means "be kept from harm while in the hour of trials," then the church of Philadelphia must have entered into the hour of trial, and the universal church will likewise enter into this period of

persecution. If τηρέω ἐκ means "to be kept out of the hour of trials," then the church of Philadelphia was assured that it would never enter into this period, and the universal church would, in like manner, be exempted from this period of suffering.

However, Gundry's interpretation of Rev 3:10 can only be sustained by denying this essential correspondence between the experience of the local church and that of the universal church. In the pre-tribulational interpretation of Rev 3:10 this correspondence is maintained. Both the local church of Philadelphia and the universal church are kept out of the hour of trial. Since the church of Philadelphia passed into the Lord's presence by death, the promise to keep her from the hour of trial was fulfilled centuries ago. However, according to 1 Thess 4:15, the universal church will survive unto the coming of the Lord. Unlike the church of Philadelphia, it will not be kept out of the hour of trial by death. The promise to keep her from the hour of trial must, therefore, be fulfilled by prior removal.

If the τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10b implies previous existence *within*, then the church of Philadelphia would have been informed that she would enter into the great tribulation, be preserved within it, and emerge victorious at its end. This is what Gundry claims for the future fulfillment of this promise. But if τηρέω ἐκ implies previous existence *within*, then there can be no future fulfillment. Both pre-tribulationists and posttribulationists believe that the hour of testing in Rev 3:10 is the same as the great tribulation which is described in Matt 24:21 as follows: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, *no, nor ever shall be.*" This passage clearly states that there will only be *one* period properly called the "great tribulation." If the church of Philadelphia entered into it centuries ago, then the whole issue is irrelevant today. The very existence of this issue in the twentieth century assumes that the great tribulation has not yet arrived; it is still in the future. Whatever was promised to the church of Philadelphia in Rev 3:10 has long been fulfilled. Suggesting that the phrase τηρέω ἐκ necessarily implies previous existence *within* is complicated by the fact that the church of Philadelphia never actually entered into the great tribulation. Therefore τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 cannot imply previous existence *within*.

The promise to keep the church of Philadelphia from the hour of testing necessarily implies that it was already out of this period of suffering. And since the saints of this church died long before its arrival, it is impossible for them to enter therein. The promise also pertains to the church era at the close of this age. The church at the end of the age will also be kept out of the hour of testing, but not in the same manner: "Then we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall be caught up together with them in the

clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:17).

### *The Object of ἐκ*

If τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10b implies previous existence within, from what is the church to be delivered? Latent in Gundry's treatment of Rev 3:10 is the basic assumption that the object of ἐκ in John 17:15b and Rev 3:10b (τοῦ πονηροῦ and τῆς ὥρας) designates the sphere in which the disciple/church is "guarded." The unexpressed threat from which the disciple/church is "guarded" must be read into the construction. Although Gundry is careful not to interpolate the words "from dangers" in his treatment of John 17:15 and "from the trials" in Rev 3:10, it is clear from his comments on the word *keep* and *hour*<sup>15</sup> that some such phrase must be supplied. To Gundry it is not deliverance "from the evil one's power" (ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ) for which Christ prays but rather deliverance from the "dangers" in the sphere of the evil one. And it is not deliverance "from the hour of testing" (ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ) which Christ promises the church, but rather deliverance from the "events" within this period of time.

Gundry points out that the ἐκ of Rev 3:10b is cited in BAG under I.c. "of situations and circumstances *out of which someone is brought*" (italics added).<sup>16</sup> On the surface this tends to support Gundry's contention that ἐκ with τηρέω means *out from within* and therefore strengthens the posttribulational position. However, a careful study of the other references cited by BAG under I.c. will show that τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10b does not convey this thought. According to BAG,<sup>17</sup> this use of ἐκ is illustrated in the NT by the following passages: (1) Gal 3:13 with ἐξαγοράζω, "redeemed us from *the curse of the law*"; (2) 1 Pet 1:18 with λυτρόω, "redeemed . . . from *your vain conversation*"; (3) John 12:27, Heb 5:7, and James 5:20 with σώζω, "save me from *this hour*" (John 12:27), "save him from *death*" (Heb 5:7), and "save a soul from *death*" (James 5:20); (4) Acts 7:10 with ἐξαπρέω, "delivered him out of *all his afflictions*"; (5) John 5:24 and 1 John 3:14 with μεταβαίνω, "is passed from *death* unto life" (John 5:24) and "have passed from *death* unto life" (John 3:14); (6) Rev 2:21; 9:20; and 16:11 with μετανοέω, "repent of *her fornication*" (2:21), "repented of *the works of their hands*" (9:20), and "repented of *their deeds*" (16:11); (7) Rev 14:13 with ἀναπαύω "rest from *their labors*"; (8) Rom 13:11 with ἐγείρω, "awake out of *sleep*";

<sup>15</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 58-60.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 55, n. 23.

<sup>17</sup>BAG, 233.



(9) Rom 11:15 with ζωή, “life from *the dead*”; and (10) Rom 6:13 with ζάω, “alive from *the dead*.” In these references the object of the preposition (see italicized words above) expresses that from which one is delivered. According to Gundry, however, deliverance in Rev 3:10 *is not* from the object of the preposition, i.e., “the hour,” but from the “events” of the hour.

The use of ἐκ in Rev 3:10b is not the same as the other references listed in BAG under 1.c. Rather than ἐκ in Rev 3:10b being used “of situations and circumstances *out of which someone is brought*,” it is used of a situation or circumstance (the hour of testing) *from which the church of Philadelphia is kept at a distance*. The use of ἐκ in Rev 3:10b is more like that given by BAG under 1.d. “of pers. and things with whom a connection is severed or is to remain severed.”<sup>18</sup> Cited under this usage of ἐκ is John 17:15 and Acts 15:29,<sup>19</sup> the two other passages in the NT where τηρέω is found with the same grammatical construction it has in Rev 3:10b. In Thayer’s treatment of ἐκ, Rev 3:10b is cited along with these two other passages under 6. “of any kind of separation or dissolution of connection with a thing or person.” According to Thayer,<sup>20</sup> the construction τηρεῖν τινα ἐκ found in these three passages means “to keep one at a distance from.” This does not suggest previous existence within but the perpetuation of a distance between the object of the verb and the object of the preposition.<sup>21</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Interpreting the phrase τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15 as implying the previous existence of the disciples within the evil one’s power results in the following complications: (1) The text does not read τηρέω ἐν; as we have seen, it is this phrase that implies previous existence within rather than τηρέω ἐκ; (2) If ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ implies previous existence within, as does ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, then the relationship of the disciples to the evil one is the same as that of the unregenerate; (3) If, on the one hand, the disciples are “in the evil one,” as Gundry’s interpretation demands, they are “out of the name” and therefore lost; if, on the other hand, the prayer of John 17:15b assured the disciples of being kept outside of the realm of the evil one, “they shall never perish” (John 10:28); (4) In identifying the church with the tribulation saints and then limiting this promise of protection in Rev

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Acts 15:29 has the intensified form, διατηρέω.

<sup>20</sup>Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962) 190.

<sup>21</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.

3:10 to the divine plagues, Gundry has neutralized the prayer in John 17:15 by the limitations of the promise in Rev 3:10. Rather than the church being kept from harm in the moral sphere of the evil one, she will suffer bitterly from the hands of Satan and the AntiChrist; (5) Gundry's interpretation of Rev 3:10 robs the church of any real consolation; (6) The local church of Philadelphia would have actually had to enter into the hour of trial if  $\tau\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega \ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa$  necessarily implies emergence from within the great tribulation; and (7) If the object of the preposition denotes the sphere in which one is guarded, rather than that from which one is delivered, then Gundry's interpretation necessitates reading something like "from dangers" or "from the trials" into the texts.

Gundry has recognized the importance of John 17:15 in determining our interpretation of Rev 3:10 in that it is the only other passage where  $\tau\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega \ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa$  is found in the NT. If this phrase were to suggest the existence of the disciples within the evil one's power, then this same implication is also likely in Rev 3:10. If, on the other hand, John 17:15 does not imply the existence of the disciples within the evil one's power, then Gundry's contention that  $\tau\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega \ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa$  implies previous existence within the hour of temptation is unfounded. These are fair and reasonable conclusions.

The supposed implication of "previous existence within" of  $\tau\eta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega \ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa$  must not be allowed to overthrow the explicit teaching of the text. If Rev 3:10 is a promise of protection *in* the hour of testing rather than out of this period, then it would read as such. The Holy Spirit would then have guided the Apostle John to write the preposition  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  rather than  $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa$  in the text. The only difference between these two Greek prepositions is a single letter. But this single letter spells the difference between this passage teaching pretribulationism or posttribulationism, and no amount of sophistry can twist one letter of Scripture into another.

#### ANALOGY

The difference between being "*kept* out of" and being "*saved* (delivered, redeemed, etc.) out of"

At 2:00 A.M. Mr. Jones in Apartment 506 wakes up. He smells smoke and turns on the light, but there is no fire. Then he notices smoke coming under the door leading into the hall. He opens the hall door and sees that the smoke is coming from Mr. Smith's apartment, 509. At this time Mr. Smith wakes up. It seems that he had been smoking in bed and had fallen asleep. The cigarette fell to the carpet and caused the fire which has him trapped within the apartment. Now

Mr. Jones from 506 is out in the hall and is about to open the door to 509 so as to help Mr. Smith when he hears a fireman call out, "Don't open that door!" The fireman runs up the hall to prevent Mr. Jones from opening the door and thereby allowing the flames to spread. Mr. Jones tells the fireman that a man is trapped inside. However, the fireman informs him that Mr. Smith will be saved out of his burning apartment by another fireman who by being raised up on a ladder outside the apartment will provide the only means of escape. Later Mr. Smith is delivered out of the fiery apartment. He has suffered severe burns, but is expected to make a complete recovery.

Ironically, although critical of the sophistry of others, Gundry indulges in some of his own. He does this by seeking to prove that "keep *out of* the hour of trial" really means "keep *in* the hour of trial." It is only natural to ask that if this be so why the preposition ἐν ("in") was not used instead of ἐκ ("out of"). He answers that it is all a matter of "emphasis." He writes,

As it is, ἐκ lays all the emphasis on emergence, in this verse on the final, victorious outcome of the keeping-guarding. The same emphasis crops up in Revelation 7:14, where the saints come "out of the great tribulation."<sup>22</sup>

To Gundry being "*kept out of*" the hour of trial means the same as "*coming out of*" the great tribulation.

Gundry's main argument is simply this: since ἐκ is used with τηρέω in Rev 3:10b, the preposition carries, he says, with it "the necessary implication of previous existence within" as it does in Rev 7:14 where it is used with the verb ἔρχομαι ("coming").<sup>23</sup> Would Gundry have us believe that Mr. Jones' situation in being *kept out of* the burning apartment by one fireman is the same as Mr. Smith's situation in being *saved out of* his burning apartment by the other? Of course not! Nevertheless, as we have seen, Gundry sees little difference between Rev 3:10 where the church is promised to be *kept out of* the hour of testing and Rev 7:14 where the great multitude is said to *come out of* the great tribulation. Would Gundry try to convince us that the fact that Mr. Jones was "kept out of" the apartment necessarily implies that he was within? Of course not! Now if being kept out of a burning apartment does not suggest "previous existence within," then being *kept out of* the hour of trial does not necessarily imply "previous existence within." The necessary implication of the church of Philadelphia being *kept out of* the hour of

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

testing is that *it was out*. The church will be kept out of the fiery furnace of the great tribulation so as to never enter therein.

The nation of Israel, however, will enter this time of fiery trials, for we read, "Alas! for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it" (Jer 30:7, see 37:7, LXX). Being "saved out of," unlike being "kept out of," *does* necessarily *imply* "previous existence within." Like Mr. Smith, who woke up in the middle of his flaming apartment, Israel will also wake up and be delivered out of the great tribulation, but not without great suffering.

In contrast to the first half of chap. 7 of Revelation, which concerns the sealing of the 144 thousand Jews, the last half (vv 9-17) concerns the saved tribulation Gentiles. They are said to "come out of" (ἐκ) the great tribulation. They, too, like Mr. Smith, come out of the fiery trial. This necessarily implies that they were first within.

In conclusion, with the help of this analogy, we have seen: (1) that to be "kept out of," as Mr. Jones was kept out of Mr. Smith's burning apartment, does *not* imply "previous existence *within*" but rather "previous existence *without*," and (2) that to be "kept out of" implies protection which prevents entrance within.

# ROBERT H. GUNDRY AND REVELATION 3:10

THOMAS R. EDGAR

*Robert Gundry's interpretation of Rev 3:10 is impossible grammatically and linguistically. The separation of the expression τηρέω ἐκ into two separate and contradictory aspects is a grammatical impossibility. In addition, the lexical meanings Gundry assigns to the verb and preposition are impossible in the expression τηρέω ἐκ unless this grammatically incorrect separation is maintained. On a purely factual basis, it is shown that, contrary to Gundry's statements, the expression τηρέω ἐκ is ideally suited to the pretribulational perspective of Rev 3:10.*

\* \* \*

Rev 3:10 states, "Because thou has kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."

This verse, which promises that believers will be "kept from the hour of trial coming on the entire earth," seems to teach a pretribulational rapture (departure of the church to be with the Lord before the tribulation period). The words τηρήσω ἐκ ("keep from," "keep out of") seem clear. However, those who believe that the rapture occurs at the end of the tribulation (posttribulational rapture) argue that τηρήσω ἐκ does not support a pretribulational rapture, but instead means "protect through," or "protect in" the tribulation, or some similar concept.

A relatively recent argument against a pretribulational rapture, which stresses that τηρήσω ἐκ does not mean "keep from" the time of tribulation, is *The Church and the Tribulation*, by Robert H. Gundry. The publishers state on the flyleaf that they believe "it will become the standard text on the posttribulational viewpoint of the rapture of the church."<sup>1</sup> However, Gundry's book is best described as an

<sup>1</sup>Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973).

argument against pretribulationism rather than as support for post-tribulationism, since the book consists of an attempt to refute the ideas of pretribulationism rather than a real positive argument for a posttribulationist rapture. Any attempt to derive Gundry's "system" from his book is very difficult, since he does not state it explicitly and some of his arguments and conclusions contradict others.

Rather than discuss Gundry's entire book, this article focuses on the section dealing with Rev 3:10, and particularly the discussion of τηρήσω ἐκ. Although many pretribulationists do not seem to realize the force of Rev 3:10, those who write against pretribulationism do and recognize the necessity to explain the plain statements of the verse in a manner consistent with their position. Gundry's basic contention is that τηρέω means "to keep or protect in a sphere of danger," and that ἐκ means "emergence from within" something. Therefore, τηρήσω ἐκ means "to protect believers in the tribulation period with a final emergence" near the end of the tribulation. He also argues that John would have used ἀπό or some similar preposition rather than ἐκ if he referred to a pretribulationist rapture. When this work first appeared, I noticed a basic exegetical error regarding τηρήσω ἐκ. An analysis of Gundry's work shows that his view of τηρήσω ἐκ is a grammatical and logical impossibility, and his statement that ἀπό would be more appropriate than ἐκ for a pretribulationist view of Rev 3:10 is unfounded.

#### GUNDRY'S EXEGESIS

##### *General inconsistencies*

As noted earlier, Gundry does not specifically state the precise system or order of events involved in his view. This must be deduced from the discussion. However, this is more difficult than one would expect due to inconsistencies in his statements and argumentation. An example from his discussion of Rev 3:10 will demonstrate this. He argues from Rev 3:10 that the expression "kept from the hour of trial" means that Christians will be kept *through* the tribulation period (the hour of trial) and be delivered out of it at the last moment when God's strong wrath is poured out on the earth.<sup>2</sup> After a long discussion emphasizing the fact that believers will be kept through the hour and finally taken out of it, he then argues on the basis of the word ὥρα ("hour") that the "hour of testing may refer only to the very last crisis at the close of the tribulation."<sup>3</sup> It is clear from numerous statements in the book that he believes that the church will

<sup>2</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 55-60.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 61.



not go through this “last crisis” at the close of the tribulation. It will be taken out prior to this “last crisis”; it will be raptured pre-“final crisis”, i.e., pre-“hour of testing.” However, this is the same “hour of testing” which he earlier insists the church will be in and from which it will emerge at the end. This seems to be a contradiction.

First, Gundry assumes that the “hour of trial” is the tribulation period and presents a sustained argument on the basis of τηρήσω ἐκ that “kept from the hour of trial” means “protected in the hour of trial and only delivered at the end.” Then he argues from the same passage on the basis of another word in the same phrase, ὥρα, that the “hour of trial” may refer to the last crisis rather than the tribulation. However, the church will not be kept in and eventually emerge from the hour of trial or last crisis, but will be delivered before the “hour.” But what about the argument that τηρήσω ἐκ proves “protection in and eventual emergence?” For Gundry, τηρήσω ἐκ can mean “keep completely out of” if the hour is the “last crisis,” but must mean “keep in and eventually out” if the hour is the entire tribulation. Despite all his argument for τηρήσω ἐκ as “protect in with eventual emergence,” Gundry apparently has no problem dispensing with all of it and taking τηρήσω ἐκ as “keep out of” (as pre-tribulationists say) if the hour refers to the final crisis, since his position requires it. His meaning for τηρήσω ἐκ apparently can fluctuate, depending on the meaning of “hour,” in whatever way is necessary to preserve his preconceived view. If Gundry believes that the church will be removed before the “final crisis,” then apparently he does not really believe that τηρήσω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 means “keep in with final emergence” on the basis of exegesis of τηρήσω ἐκ, as he claims; rather, the determinative factor for the meaning of τηρήσω ἐκ seems to be the meaning he assumes for the hour of trial. In other words, the exegetical meanings are controlled by a presumed post-tribulationist position. If Gundry believes that the “hour of trial” may be the “final crisis,” then to be consistent he should argue that the church will be kept in the final crisis (hour) and eventually emerge. He cannot do this, however, and still maintain one of his basic arguments, namely, that the church does not experience God’s wrath. This manner of argument, which proceeds as if each word is in isolation from those around it and gives one meaning to a biblical expression in order to argue a specific point and then assigns the same expression a different and contradictory meaning to argue another point, is typical of the book.

The next section will discuss the most glaring blunder in Gundry’s exegesis, a classic case of losing sight of the forest due to the trees. The most amazing fact is that those who have evaluated Gundry’s book have either not noticed it or paid little attention to it, although they have pointed out other obvious inconsistencies.

*The impossibility of Gundry's view of the meaning of τηρήσω ἐκ*

Gundry argues that the preposition ἐκ means "out from within" and that its primary sense is emergence.<sup>4</sup> From this he concludes that ἐκ requires that the church be in the hour of the tribulation so that it can emerge from within. He also argues that τηρέω "always occurs for protection within the sphere of danger."<sup>5</sup> He then states regarding τηρήσω ἐκ, "we properly understand τηρέω ἐκ as protection issuing in emission."<sup>6</sup> He adds, "Presence within the period is directly implied."<sup>7</sup> He clearly states that this emission is not at the beginning of the tribulation period<sup>8</sup> but in the final stage, that is, after a prolonged time of "keeping" or protection in the tribulation period.

Gundry has been accused of separating the verb and the preposition into two separate acts. In response to criticism he states that he does not separate the two.<sup>9</sup> Let us look at some facts. (1) If ἐκ means "emergence" or "emission" and τηρέω always means "protection within the sphere of danger" (both of which Gundry claims), then the *only* way one can conclude (as Gundry does) that τηρέω ἐκ<sup>10</sup> is protection through most of the tribulation issuing in emission near the end of the tribulation period is to take each word separately and add the individual meanings. This is to treat the words as though they were two individual entries in a dictionary and ignore the fact that they are in a clause and function together. There is no way to deny that he has done this; Gundry's denials cannot disprove the obvious fact that he *has* separated the two. (2) Additional statements by Gundry<sup>11</sup> in his book make it clear that he does separate the verb and the preposition. Arguing that ἐκ means "emergence from within," but trying to refute any attempts to have the emergence at the beginning of the tribulation, Gundry, arguing that τηρέω requires definite keeping in the tribulation period, states,

. . . if we imagine that ἐκ denotes exit, but say that the church will be caught out right after the *beginning* of the seventieth week, we render the word τηρέω (*keep or guard*) practically meaningless. . . . It would be sheer sophistry to say that the church will be removed immediately

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 55-56.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 58 [emphasis mine].

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 59.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>9</sup>Robert H. Gundry, excerpts from a letter dated June 28, 1974.

<sup>10</sup>The lexical form τηρέω ἐκ will be used from now on in the discussion rather than the future τηρήσω as it actually occurs in Rev 3:10.

<sup>11</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.



upon entrance into the hour, for then the keeping will last only for an instant and the promise becomes devoid of real meaning.<sup>12</sup>

It is obvious from this quotation that Gundry wants to have a definite, prolonged period of keeping (τηρέω) as well as eventual emission (ἐκ). This requires not τηρέω ἐκ but τηρέω καὶ . . . ἐκ. If any more evidence is required to demonstrate the separation of the verb from the preposition into two aspects, a statement in the next paragraph of Gundry's book leaves no room for doubt. Gundry explains why he thinks other prepositions which would be more clearly posttribulational were not used in Rev 3:10: they do not have the proper emphasis. Then he explains why ἐκ is used: "As it is, ἐκ lays all the emphasis on emergence, in this verse on the final, victorious outcome of the keeping-guarding."<sup>13</sup> Here he insists on the full meaning of "emergence from within" for the preposition ἐκ.

From these two quotations it is clear that Gundry argues that τηρέω demands a definite and extended time of "keeping-guarding" and that ἐκ lays all the emphasis on emergence as the outcome of the keeping-guarding. As he states numerous times, τηρέω ἐκ means a prolonged period of keeping in the tribulation with emission at the final stage since otherwise, he feels, τηρέω and ἐκ lose their meaning. Contrary to his denial, he *has* concluded that the meaning of τηρέω ἐκ is the sum of the meanings of τηρέω taken independently and ἐκ taken independently. In fact, it is even worse, since τηρέω ceases functioning near the end of the hour and ἐκ does not function at all until the last moment.

However, this piecemeal approach to exegesis is a grammatical impossibility. When a verb is followed by a prepositional phrase, as here, the prepositional phrase gives the direction to the verb. An illustration will help. "Stand up" in English does not mean stand for a while and eventually climb up. It is one action, i.e., standing in the upward direction, that is, rising. "Keep out" does not mean keep in for a while and eventually come out. It is one action, to keep in a certain direction, to keep out, i.e., stay out of. To interpret Acts 12:5 as Gundry does Rev 3:10 would mean that Peter was being protected (kept) by the Jews in some sphere of danger and after a prolonged period of time he was placed in jail (Πέτρος ἐτηρεῖτο ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ). It is clear from the context that Peter was being "kept in" the prison; there is only one action. A more obvious example is Acts 4:10. "Whom God raised from the dead" (ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν) does not mean that Jesus was raised for a prolonged period of time and

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. These are not isolated instances taken out of context. The work is saturated with this concept and such expressions.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

eventually came out of the dead. The verb and preposition describe one action, "to raise out of."

A few more examples should clarify the point. If Gundry is consistent with his reasoning on the meaning of τηρέω ἐκ, then Acts 25:4, τηρεῖσθαι τὸν Παῦλον εἰς Καισάρειαν, "keep Paul in Caesarea," would mean to keep Paul protected somewhere for a prolonged time (otherwise τηρέω is devoid of meaning) and then rapidly push him into Caesarea (since εἰς means "into," normally with the concept of going into something). However, it is clear that τηρέω and εἰς do not function as two separate entities in this passage. Rather they are two words describing one action. The preposition εἰς has the basic idea "into" but combined with τηρέω it obviously means "in." The same is true of τηρέω ἐκ. Although ἐκ may have the basic idea "out from within," when it is combined with τηρέω it can *only* mean *out* and the idea of emergence is not involved. So τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 cannot describe two actions "to keep in and eventually emerge," but one action, "to keep out."

It is no more possible to separate a verb and its accompanying prepositional phrase into two separate actions in Greek than it is in English. Rather, as in normal language use, the preposition states the action in a more specific sense. Does any language function as Gundry interprets τηρέω ἐκ? Certainly Greek does not.

Even if Gundry did not separate the two, his solution is still impossible. How can "to keep in" be combined in one action with a preposition meaning "out from within, to emerge"? Can any sense be made of "I will keep you in out from within?" Obviously, something is wrong. Since Jesus combines the two words, they must make sense. The only solution is that Gundry has given a wrong meaning to one of the words. "Out from within" is a common meaning for ἐκ. It may also mean "out" without any idea of emergence<sup>14</sup> contrary to Gundry's claim. But this gives the impossible meaning "I will keep you in out," or "I will keep you in out from within." Since neither of the two renderings of ἐκ ("out" or "out from within") alters the impossibility of this rendering, the problem is with Gundry's interpretation of τηρέω. Clearly ἐκ means *out*. "Out" and "in" cannot go together in one action. Since "out" is clearly correct, the problem is with the idea "in."

The problem is that τηρέω does not mean "to keep *in*" as Gundry claims, but merely "to keep" or "guard." Some other indication, such as the preposition, is necessary to indicate the direction, location, or sphere of the keeping. This can be seen by comparing τηρέω ἐν, ("keep in") and τηρέω ἀπό ("keep from"). The verb is the

<sup>14</sup>See the more detailed discussion of ἐκ to follow.

same but the preposition changes the direction or locale of the "keeping." It should be obvious to anyone with even a cursory acquaintance with grammar that τηρέω ("keep") cannot mean "keep in" when it occurs with a preposition meaning "out." Ἐκ does not *always* mean emergence as Gundry claims; but in each occurrence it *does* always mean the opposite of "in."

We have seen the impossibility of interpreting τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 as protection for a period of time issuing in emission. It is a linguistic impossibility. Τηρέω with ἐκ ("out") cannot have *any* meaning of "in." If the meaning of τηρέω ("keep") is twisted to mean "deliver" or "take" there is still no stress on being "in." No matter how the meaning of τηρέω is twisted this expression says nothing at all regarding presence in or through the tribulation.

Gundry's contention that τηρέω, when "a situation of danger is in view," always means "protection within the sphere of danger"<sup>15</sup> is less than convincing when τηρέω is studied. First, τηρέω usually means "keep" without any idea of "keeping in." Second, there is no place where τηρέω means "keep in" a sphere, which sphere is the object of the preposition, when it occurs with a preposition meaning something other than "in" (or possibly "through," implying presence in). Τηρέω ἀπό, τηρέω ὑπό, τηρέω ἄχρι, τηρέω παρά, τηρέω περί, τηρέω ἐκ, etc., do not mean and cannot mean "keep in."

Although Gundry argues that τηρέω *always* means "protection within the sphere of danger" and therefore τηρέω in Rev 3:10 demands prolonged presence in the tribulation, he apparently forgets that on the previous page he stated that τηρέω ἀπό would not require presence within the tribulation. In other words, although the same sphere of danger is present, τηρέω does not require presence within the sphere of danger in this case. The only change is that the preposition ἐκ has been changed to ἀπό, but this means that he must be wrong on at least one of these points since they contradict each other. Τηρέω cannot *always* require presence in the sphere of danger if it does not with ἀπό. If it is not required with ἀπό, then it is impossible for τηρέω, in itself, to require presence *in* the sphere of danger. Since obviously ἐκ, which means "out of," cannot require presence *in* something, then not only on the obvious facts of language mentioned above, but on the basis of Gundry's own statements, τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 cannot require presence in the tribulation period. The only possible constructions using the standard prepositions which mean "keep in" are those that occur with a preposition meaning or implying "in": τηρέω ἐν, τηρέω εἰς, or τηρέω διά. Τηρέω εἰς occurs in the NT with the meaning to keep "until" or "unto" some

<sup>15</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 58.

point, and therefore in the NT does not mean to "keep in." Τηρέω ἐν would stress the fact that the person would be "kept in" some sphere and not allowed out, whereas τηρέω διὰ in Rev 3:10 would stress the idea of protection during the time involved. It is impossible for τηρέω with any preposition to mean keep in and eventually remove. It is impossible to state both of these concepts with any one verb and its accompanying prepositional phrase.

It is logically and grammatically impossible for τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 to mean protection within the tribulation period (sphere of danger) with eventual emergence, as Gundry claims. This is not merely a difference in possible interpretations but a calamitous linguistic and logical blunder. I am certain that Gundry himself knows better than to treat Greek or any language in such a way. However, he has argued as if the individual words were in isolation and combined the details of each in mutually contradictory fashion.

#### Τηρέω ἐκ IN REV 3:10 DEFINITELY IMPLIES A PRETRIBULATIONAL RAPTURE

If the rapture is pre-"hour of trial," a study of the terms in Rev 3:10 indicates that τηρέω ἐκ is the most natural choice, rather than an improbable choice. In addition, τηρέω ἐκ is definitely against the idea that the believers will be in or kept through the "hour of trial." It must be kept in mind, however, that the entire phrase τηρέω ἐκ . . . is decisive, not merely individual words in isolation. The words will be discussed individually and then as a unit.

#### *Ek does not necessitate the idea of emergence*

Gundry argues that the preposition ἐκ has the basic idea of emergence and therefore implies that the believers addressed in Rev 3:10, in order to emerge, must have been in the tribulation period.<sup>16</sup> He states: "if ἐκ ever occurs without the thought of emergence, it does so very exceptionally."<sup>17</sup>

A study of ἐκ does not support Gundry's contentions. The following statistics were derived from a study of each of the 923 occurrences of ἐκ in the NT.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 55-56.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>18</sup>W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, 5th ed., rev. by H. F. Moulton, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), pp. 1058-67. Robert Morgenthaler (*Statistik des neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes* [Zurich: Gotthelf, 1958] 92) counts 915.

*Approximate Number of Occurrences<sup>19</sup> in  
Certain General Categories*

Cause	20	Partitive	130
Content	32	Separation	52
Emergence	186	Source	253
Location (at)	23	Time	16
Means	90		

Although there often is an implication of emergence from within in uses other than the one titled "emergence," it is clear that in the majority of instances, the primary stress in the preposition ἐκ is not that of emergence. Several of the above categories seem to be definitely contrary to the meaning of emergence. The category titled "separation" is specifically a category for passages which do not mean emergence, but imply "away from" or "from," just as ἀπό. Some examples are as follows.

John 20:1. Mary saw the stone which had been taken "away from (ἐκ) the tomb." It does not seem likely that the stone was inside the tomb to emerge from within. Matt 27:60, 66; 28:2, and Luke 24:2 use ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου "away from the tomb" to describe the stone but do not indicate that it was inside the tomb. Another incident where a stone was taken away from a tomb is the raising of Lazarus. The tomb was a cave and the stone was placed or lying "upon" it, not within it. All of these verses indicate that the stone was not inside the tomb; therefore, ἐκ was used in John 20:21 to mean "away from" without any idea of emergence. The stone was not "pulled out of the tomb."

Acts 15:29 uses the verb διατηρέω, an intensified form of τηρέω, together with ἐκ. It is clear that the apostles and elders at Jerusalem are asking the Christians at Antioch to stay entirely "away from" idolatry, blood, strangled things, and fornication. There is no indication that the Antioch Christians were involved in these things and therefore to emerge from them. (Literally, of course, they could not be "in" idol sacrifices, blood, etc.) Much less are they instructing the Christians to keep or guard themselves from danger while in these things and then several years in the future to emerge from within them.

Acts 12:7. "His chains fell off from his hands." The chains were not in Peter's hands to emerge from them; rather, they fell away from (ἐκ) his hands.

<sup>19</sup>Many instances did not fit conveniently into a general category; however, these statistics are sufficient for this discussion.

Acts 27:29 does not seem to mean that the anchors were emerging from within the stern, but that they were "out from" the stern.

Acts 28:4 seems to mean that the snake hung "from" Paul's hand and does not seem to require that the snake was "in" his hand previously.

2 Cor 1:10 states, "who rescued us from such a great death. . . ." In the context it is clear that Paul refers to physical death. He was rescued *from* death rather than having emerged from death. He was not *in* it.

1 Thess 1:10, depending on the Greek text one follows, uses ἀπό or ἐκ to state, "Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath." Gundry apparently prefers the variant ἐκ in this verse.<sup>20</sup> Earlier Gundry regards this verse as a reference to God's retributive wrath and states that the church will not suffer this wrath.<sup>21</sup> He clearly differentiates this wrath from the tribulation period.<sup>22</sup> However, he seems to waver on his view on the following pages.<sup>23</sup> However, if this is God's eternal wrath, then it is clear that the preposition has no implication of the believer being in God's eternal wrath and then emerging. If it is God's retributive wrath near the end of the tribulation, as Gundry seems to hold, then believers either do not suffer this wrath, as Gundry says, and therefore are not in it to emerge, or if they are protected in the midst of it as Gundry states is possible,<sup>24</sup> then there still is no concept of emergence. If the wrath refers to the tribulation period, then this is another verse promising rescue from that period. If one reads ἐκ, as Gundry does, rather than ἀπό with the majority text, this verse is against Gundry's view no matter which of the interpretations of "wrath" one may hold.

1 Tim 4:17. Paul states that the Lord rescued him "out of the lion's mouth." He does not imply that he was actually in the lion's mouth and emerged, but that God kept him "from" the lions.<sup>25</sup>

2 Pet 2:21. This verse does not seem to imply that the persons were within the "holy commandment" and emerged from it, but it simply states that they turned "away from" it.

However, let us get right to the issue of whether or not ἐκ always implies emergence. There are two verses in the NT where ἐκ occurs with τηρέω (John 17:15; Rev 3:10). As already discussed, it is

<sup>20</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 48-49.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 54. Although this seems to contradict other statements of Gundry regarding God's retributive wrath, it is clearly stated.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 54.

<sup>25</sup>Although a figure of speech is involved, apparently the figure builds on the perspective of facing lions in the arena.



linguistically improbable for a verb meaning “protect in” (as Gundry claims) or meaning “keep, protect, guard” (the correct view as will be shown) to occur with a preposition requiring emergence. As previously shown, Gundry’s analysis requires the meaning “keep in coming out.” The more probable meaning of τηρέω would require “protect, keep, guard emerging.” Both of these are an impossibility.

To sum up, the preposition ἐκ does not always imply emergence from within as Gundry claims. Even if it did 99% of the time, it can hardly imply emergence with τηρέω. One thing is clear: ἐκ does not mean “in,”<sup>26</sup> and its occurrence in Rev 3:10 can only be a hindrance to posttribulationism.

*Ἐκ is the best word if the rapture is pretribulational*

Gundry also argues that ἀπό (“away from”) in Rev 3:10 would “at least permit a pretribulational interpretation.”<sup>27</sup> It is clear that he is not going to allow even ἀπό to require a pretribulational interpretation. It is amazing that with two possible prepositions which would demand the Church’s presence in the tribulation (ἐν, “in,” διὰ “through”) Gundry allows ἀπό (“from”) at the most merely to permit a pretribulational view and cannot see his way clear to allow even the one preposition ἐκ (which means the opposite of “in”) to require a pretribulational rapture. Gundry states that ἀπό would at least permit a pretribulational view, implying that ἐκ in Rev 3:10 cannot even permit such a view. In addition he lists some other prepositions—ἐκτός, ἔξω, ἔξωθεν, ἄνευ, and χωρίς<sup>28</sup>—which he feels would have required a pretribulational view. To state it concisely, Gundry feels that either ἐκτός, ἔξω, ἔξωθεν, ἄνευ, χωρίς, or possibly ἀπό, would have been used by John in this verse if a pretribulational rapture were in view, and that ἐκ would not (could not) be used. However, a more careful linguistic study shows that the opposite is true, namely, that in all probability John would not have used ἀπό or the other prepositions Gundry listed, but would use ἐκ if he believed the rapture will occur prior to the tribulation period. Ἐκ is the most probable choice, and in Rev 3:10 it can only mean what pretribulationists claim it means.

*Ἐκ is better than ἄνευ, ἔξω, ἔξωθεν, ἐκτός, or χωρίς to indicate a pretribulational rapture.* Gundry, as stated above, feels that one of the prepositions ἄνευ, ἔξω, ἔξωθεν, or ἐκτός would be used to

<sup>26</sup>That ἐκ means “in” could possibly be argued from one or two passages, but it is improbable that this is the correct meaning.

<sup>27</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 58.

indicate clearly a pretribulational rapture. However, ἄνευ in the NT means "without" in the sense of "not with," i.e., "without griping" (cf. Matt 10:29, 1 Pet 3:1, 4:9). It is not used to mean "without" in a spatial or geographical sense as would be necessary to imply removal or keeping away from the "hour of trial." In classical Greek,<sup>29</sup> although ἄνευ may occur with the meaning "away from," it more commonly means "without" as the opposite of "with," or "except." This seems borne out in the papyri and LXX also. It should also be noted that ἄνευ occurs only four times in the NT and not at all in John's writings. It is contrary to its NT and Johannine usage to expect it to occur in Rev 3:10, if Rev 3:10 related to a pretribulational rapture, unless there were no other possible way to state it. The probable nuance of ἄνευ if used in Rev 3:10 would be "I will keep you without the hour of trial . . .," that is "I will keep you, without at the same time keeping the hour of trial." This seems improbable.

Gundry also states that ἐξω would *require* previous removal and asks why John did not use ἐξω if a pretribulational rapture is in view in Rev 3:10. Liddell and Scott list one of the meanings for ἐξω as "out" or "out of" ("out from within") when it occurs with a verb of motion,<sup>30</sup> but they say exactly the same thing regarding ἐκ.<sup>31</sup> Admittedly, ἐκ *frequently* has the idea "out from within" (not *always*, as Gundry implies). However, ἐξω occurs 63 times in the NT<sup>32</sup> of which 36 occurrences (more than half) have the idea "out from within." The LXX<sup>33</sup> shows the same usage. Of 105 occurrences at least 40 have the idea "out from within." We may wonder why of two words so overlapping in meaning Gundry insists one (ἐκ) *cannot* mean previous removal in Rev 3:10 while the other (ἐξω) would *require* it? Johannine usage is even clearer. John uses ἐξω 16 times of which only 3 do not have the meaning "out from within."<sup>34</sup> Since ἐξω often has the same meaning as ἐκ, in fact the very meaning Gundry *stresses* for ἐκ, particularly when John uses it, there certainly is no reason why John would use ἐξω in preference to ἐκ to indicate a pretribulational rapture.

Another factor should also be mentioned. The word ἐξω occurs at least 168 times in biblical Greek; not once does it occur with a word indicating time. Therefore it is not surprising that it does not

<sup>29</sup>H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., rev. by H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940) 135.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 600.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 498.

<sup>32</sup>Moulton and Geden, *Concordance*, 348-49.

<sup>33</sup>E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek Versions of the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck-U. Verlagsanstalt, 1954) 501-2.

<sup>34</sup>Someone may argue that these are with verbs of motion. However, the same principle is true of ἐκ.



occur in Rev 3:10. Gundry also seems to think that the concept of "outside" (ἔξω) would be the proper stress if Rev 3:10 related to a pretribulational rapture. However, to keep "outside of" a period of time is an unusual idiom in Greek or English. To "keep out of" a period, however, is normal usage in both languages. In English we could well say "I will keep you from the hot southwestern summer." It would be unusual to say "I will keep you outside of the hot summer." The emphasis is also different. Τηρέω ἐκ means to "keep from, to keep out of, to keep from being in," but τηρέω ἔξω would mean "I will keep you outside" stressing the location rather than separation. It is very unlikely that John would use ἔξω with τηρέω to describe a pretribulational rapture in Rev 3:10.

The same arguments apply to the other two words Gundry mentions, i.e., ἐκτός and χωρίς. Ἐκτός means "outside," "except," or "besides." It does not occur with a word for time in biblical Greek. Ἐκτός occurs seven times in the NT (five in Paul) and not at all in John's writings. To state that, if Rev 3:10 was pretribulational, John would use this word rather than ἐκ, which occurs more than 800 times in the NT and more than 300 times in John alone, is to go against the facts. The word χωρίς means "outside," "without," and is no more probable in this passage than the other words. Χωρίς occurs 38 times in the NT. In every case it means "separate from" or "without" in the sense of lacking. John only uses it three times. There is no obvious reason why John would use it in Rev 3:10 rather than ἐκ.

Several additional facts should be mentioned regarding the possible use of ἄνευ, ἔξω, ἔξωθεν, ἐκτός, or χωρίς in Rev 3:10. Τηρέω does not occur with any of these prepositions in biblical literature (NT or LXX). Τηρέω occurs with ἐν, εἰς, ἐπί, ἄχρι, and ἐκ in the NT and with ἀπό, ἕως, and περὶ in the LXX.

As we have seen, two of the four prepositions in question are not used very often in the NT. Ἄνευ occurs four times, none of which are Johannine. Ἐκτός occurs seven times, none of which are Johannine. Χωρίς occurs 38 times. Only three times are in John's writings. Upon what basis Gundry proclaims that John would use these prepositions in Rev 3:10 if pretribulationism is intended is certainly not obvious.

Ἐξω occurs 63 times; 14 of these are Johannine. Of these Johannine uses, 12 have the meaning "out from within." Once again, why John should use this preposition rather than ἐκ when both commonly mean "out from within" is not clear.<sup>35</sup> Why John should use one of these four prepositions, none of which, as we have seen,

<sup>35</sup>It is less clear why ἔξω *requires* a pretribulational view when it often means "out from within," which is the very reason Gundry says ἐκ *cannot* go with a pretribulational view.

fits well in the context of Rev 3:10, and prefer them to a word which occurs over 800 times in the NT and which is used more by John than any other NT author, is not at all clear. Why John must use ἀνευ, ἔξω, ἔξωθεν, ἐκτός, or χωρίς, when they occur nowhere in the NT with a word for time (such as ὥρα) is not at all clear. Why John should use one of these five prepositions with τηρέω in Rev 3:10, when they do not occur with τηρέω in biblical literature is not apparent. It appears that Gundry merely referred to a lexicon without any consideration of the actual use of these words.

*Εκ is more likely than ἀπό to be used for a pretribulational view in Rev 3:10.* Gundry argues that τηρέω ἀπό in Rev 3:10 would "at least permit a pretribulational interpretation."<sup>36</sup> He feels that ἐκ would not permit such a view. In other words he feels that ἀπό would be used if a pretribulational rapture is in view in Rev 3:10.

Is it more likely that John would use ἀπό in this case? Is there such a difference between τηρέω ἀπό and τηρέω ἐκ that one preposition, ἀπό, permits a pretribulational interpretation but the other, ἐκ, excludes it? Greek grammars point out the well-recognized fact that by NT times the classical distinctions between ἀπό and ἐκ were disappearing and that the two words "frequently overlapped" in meaning.<sup>37</sup> The two words are used somewhat interchangeably. A study of textual variants shows some fluctuation between ἐκ and ἀπό, indicating that the scribes regarded them as interchangeable. In addition, when we note that "separation" is a valid meaning for ἐκ according to Greek grammarians and the standard lexicons,<sup>38</sup> we should be somewhat surprised to see such stress laid on the difference between ἀπό and ἐκ. We should expect to see some evidence showing such a difference.

A thorough study indicates that either word would indicate a prior removal or pretribulational interpretation, but, contrary to Gundry's opinion, ἐκ is the more probable to be used with a pretribulational view for the following reasons.

(1) John prefers ἐκ rather than ἀπό. Grammarians point out that "the greatest use of ἐκ" is in the Revelation, the Gospel of John, and

<sup>36</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.

<sup>37</sup>C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1963), 71-72; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 3rd ed. (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919) 569-70; J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908-63), 1.102, 237; 3.251, 259.

<sup>38</sup>Robertson, *Historical Grammar*, 597, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and rev. by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 234-35.

1 John,<sup>39</sup> that ἐκ is used "much more widely" than in classical Greek,<sup>40</sup> and in Revelation the ratio of ἐκ to ἀπό is 100:20.<sup>41</sup> A simple word count<sup>42</sup> reveals that ἐκ occurs in the Gospel of John more than any other book—165 times. The book of Revelation is next with 135 instances, and the small book of 1 John has 34 occurrences. John's use of ἀπό is quite the reverse. Although ἀπό occurs 110 times in Matthew, 118 times in Luke, and 108 times in Acts, it occurs only 41 times in John's gospel and a total of 96 times in all of John's writings. In the book of Revelation John uses ἐκ 135 times and ἀπό only 34 times.<sup>43</sup> It is clear that John prefers ἐκ whenever it may be used, and does not prefer ἀπό. This preference is, in fact, a characteristic of John's writings. Since ἀπό and ἐκ are similar in meaning by NT times, since both can mean "separation from," since both imply "not in," it is clear that John would prefer ἐκ, as in Rev 3:10, rather than ἀπό if he regarded the rapture as pretribulational.

(2) The verb τηρέω does not occur with the preposition ἀπό in the NT;<sup>44</sup> however, it does occur with ἐκ in at least one passage other than Rev 3:10. This occurrence is also in John's writings (John 17:15). There is no textual dispute over the preposition in John 17:15. This means that there is evidence for John's use of the expression τηρέω ἐκ but none for his employment of τηρέω ἀπό.<sup>45</sup>

(3) The preposition ἀπό occurs with ὥρα seven times in the NT (once in John—John 19:27), but it never means to separate from the time, nor to emerge from the hour. Therefore, it is not likely that John would use ἀπό with ὥρα in Rev 3:10 to express a pretribulational rapture as Gundry claims.<sup>46</sup> However, ἐκ does occur twice in the NT with ὥρα, both in John's writings (John 12:27; Rev 3:10). In John 12:27 it means separate from.<sup>47</sup> In Rev 3:10 it means "separate from" or Gundry's concept of emergence. Since John does not use ἀπό in a sense that would allow a pretribulational rapture, or even a posttribulational rapture, in Rev 3:10, but does use ἐκ in such a way, it is obvious that Gundry's claim that John would use ἀπό is not based on the evidence. Since John does use ἐκ with ὥρα in John

<sup>39</sup>F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, trans. R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961) 114.

<sup>40</sup>Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3.249.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>42</sup>The numbers vary slightly, depending upon the Greek text used.

<sup>43</sup>Moulton and Geden, *Concordance*, 1041, 1066-67.

<sup>44</sup>James 1:27 is not an exception, since the preposition ἀπό seems to be connected with ἄσπιλον rather than τηρεῖν ἑαυτὸν.

<sup>45</sup>Τηρέω with either preposition is rare. The verb occurs once with ἀπό in the canonical LXX and once in the Apocrypha. It occurs with ἐκ twice in the NT.

<sup>46</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57-58.

<sup>47</sup>Gundry admits this and that it does not mean emergence from within (p. 57).

12:27 to express the idea of separation, it is much more likely that he would use ἐκ than ἀπό in Rev 3:10 if he referred to a concept based on a pretribulational rapture. In other words, ἐκ in Rev 3:10 agrees with the pretribulational view.

*Ἐκ is better for the pretribulational view than other prepositions.*

Dana and Mantey list the following standard prepositions in NT Greek: ἀνά, ἀντί, ἀπό, διά, ἐκ, εἰς, ἐν, ἐπί, κατά, μετά, παρά, περί, πρό, πρός, σύν, ὑπέρ, and ὑπό.<sup>48</sup> Only two of these seventeen prepositions could possibly be used in the phrase in question in Rev 3:10 with a meaning that would allow for a pretribulational rapture.<sup>49</sup> They are ἀπό and ἐκ. However, we have seen that it is highly improbable that John would use ἀπό in such an instance. Therefore ἐκ is the only preposition John was likely to use in Rev 3:10 if he regarded the rapture as pretribulational. On the other hand, if John was expressing a posttribulational view of the rapture he obviously could have used διά, εἰς, ἐν, or κατά, and he also could have used ἐπί, παρά, or πρός if the meanings expressed in Dana and Mantey are accepted.<sup>50</sup> Although there are several prepositions that could be used to indicate a posttribulational view of the rapture explicitly,<sup>51</sup> none of which occur in Rev 3:10, ἐκ, the only preposition likely to occur in a pretribulational view of Rev 3:10 is used.

*Τηρέω ἐκ does not express emergence from the hour*

It is impossible for τηρέω ἐκ to prove a posttribulational view of Rev 3:10 even if ἐκ meant "emergence from within," since this could occur at any time, including the very beginning of the hour (tribulation period). Gundry's statements that if we say the emergence is at the beginning of the hour "we render the word τηρέω (*keep or guard*) practically meaningless," and that then "the keeping will last only for an instant"<sup>52</sup> show beyond all possibility of denial that he has separated τηρέω and ἐκ into two separate components. However, as shown previously, such a position is impossible; therefore, if ἐκ meant emergence as Gundry claims, there is every possibility that it could

<sup>48</sup>H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 99-112.

<sup>49</sup>The use of the so-called improper prepositions has been discussed and their use in this passage shown to be unlikely.

<sup>50</sup>According to Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 900, these prepositions in expressions of time would all express presence in the hour of trial.

<sup>51</sup>Certain improper prepositions such as ἔντος, ἔσω, and μέσον could conceivably be used to indicate presence in the hour (if we argue as Gundry does on p. 58 of his book); however, this is unlikely.

<sup>52</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.

occur at the beginning of the period. As we have also seen, it is impossible for ἐκ to mean emergence if τηρέω means keep *in* the hour as Gundry claims,<sup>53</sup> since τηρέω and ἐκ go together and the preposition ἐκ indicates the direction or sphere of the “keeping” (τηρέω). It should be obvious that τηρέω cannot mean “keep within” and occur with a preposition meaning either “out from within” or “out.” It cannot mean either “keep within out” or “keep within out from within” as we have previously shown. This impossibility should reveal immediately that τηρέω *cannot* mean keep within the sphere of danger (hour, tribulation, period) in Rev 3:10 as Gundry claims.

We also shall see that ἐκ does not imply emergence when it occurs with τηρέω. Gundry not only erroneously isolates the two words τηρέω and ἐκ, but despite his long discussion, he is wrong on the meaning of both τηρέω and ἐκ. Although the mass of details he presents tends to obscure the basic issue, the error of his position on Rev 3:10 should be readily apparent to anyone familiar with Greek or English. His arguments are equivalent to someone arguing from a whole mass of details that grass actually turns black at night and missing the basic point that the lack of light is the significant factor. That τηρέω cannot mean what Gundry claims is so obvious that those previously attempting to defend posttribulationism have not argued as he does, but have tried to refute Rev 3:10 in other ways.

*The meaning of τηρέω.* Despite Gundry's statements that τηρέω means “to guard or protect in a sphere of danger,”<sup>54</sup> it does not necessarily mean this. In classical Greek τηρέω is used of “keeping back of dogs, keeping from disease.” In the LXX, Prov 7:5, the verb τηρέω is used with ἀπὸ γυναικός to mean “keep or stay away from” a woman. The compound verb διατηρέω is used in Acts 15:29 to mean “stay or keep away from idol sacrifices . . . etc.” One of the most common uses of τηρέω in the NT is in the expression to keep God's Word (commandments, Jesus' word). This does not mean to protect it, but to “hold to,” “hold,” or “keep” it. Τηρέω is used in John 2:10 (“you have kept the good wine”) to mean “keep, hold, hold back,” in John 9:16 to “keep” the sabbath, in 1 Cor 7:37 “to keep his own

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>54</sup>Although Gundry at first states that this is true when danger is present, he then states that this is always true in biblical Greek (p. 58). The above examples show that it is not always true. Since several references include the idea of danger, it is clear that it is not necessarily true even when danger is present. In addition, Gundry's statement that “keeping necessarily implies danger” and the “keeping is required by their presence in the danger” (p. 58) indicates that he is in effect making his view the universal meaning for the verb “keep.” The examples given here are not given as an argument regarding the lack or presence of danger, however, but to show that τηρέω does not imply presence “in,” but can mean “protect from.”



virgin." Paul uses it to say, "I kept myself from being a burden" (2 Cor 11:9), and of the angels who did not "keep" their estate.

Τηρέω can mean "guard," or "keep," or "keep away from." To assume that in Rev 3:10 it refers to being in the presence of danger is to assume Gundry's conclusion that the church is present in the tribulation. However, Jesus states He will keep them from the *period*. There is no reason to assume that this means "keeping in" the sphere of danger. It has already been demonstrated that τηρέω ἐκ cannot mean "guard in" or "keep in" when it is used with ἐκ, "out." The concept that τηρέω implies "presence within" is contrary to the evidence and the basic meaning of τηρέω. The verb, itself, implies nothing regarding the direction or sphere of keeping or protecting. This can only be determined from other elements in the sentence. In this case the sphere or direction is indicated by ἐκ.

Another aspect of τηρέω needs to be mentioned. Τηρέω is not a verb implying motion such as ἔρχομαι (come) or αἶρω (take). Verbs of motion occurring with ἐκ imply emergence, but this does not apply when the idea of motion is not present. Verbs which may imply motion, such as σώζω ("save") and ῥύομαι ("rescue"), when used with ἐκ may imply either separation or emergence. Τηρέω, however, has no such connotation of motion or direction; it merely means "keep" or "guard." For example, the preposition εἰς normally indicates "motion into a thing or into its immediate vicinity."<sup>55</sup> However, in several occurrences with τηρέω (in the NT) it means "with a view to, unto." In Acts 25:4 it occurs with τηρέω meaning "in" or "at." No idea of "motion into" is implied.

Τηρέω occurs 69 times in the NT. It never occurs with the implication of motion. In fact, the opposite is true of τηρέω; the stress is on stability or maintaining a position, or standard. This large number of occurrences is adequate to determine the basic concept of τηρέω. There are 38 occurrences of τηρέω in the LXX (including apocryphal works; 27 are canonical), none of which implies motion. Biblical Greek, the papyri and classical Greek<sup>56</sup> all give the same testimony. Τηρέω itself has no implication of motion; rather the idea of stability is prominent. Such ideas as to keep someone in a place (prison), to maintain something or a standard, to preserve, watch, protect, are common for τηρέω (cf. Matt 27:36; Acts 12:5; 1 Pet 1:4; Jude 6).

The significance of this discussion may be seen in a comparison with the use of ἐκ with another verb, αἶρω, in John 17:15. Jesus says,

<sup>55</sup>Bauer, *Lexicon*, 228.

<sup>56</sup>J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *A Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1930) 633 and Liddell and Scott, *A Greek Lexicon*, 1789.



"I do not ask that you take them out of the world." With the verb αἶρω, which implies motion, the preposition ἐκ has the idea of emergence. The idea of emergence does not come from ἐκ alone, but from ἐκ with the verb αἶρω. If John, in Rev 3:10, desired to indicate removal from *within* the hour (tribulation period), then αἶρω ἐκ would indicate this specifically. However, τηρέω ἐκ does not indicate motion; rather, it means "keep out of," "maintain in a position out of," or "preserve out of." The difference may be illustrated in English. "Take out of" or "take out from within the hospital" is not the same as "keep out of" or "keep out from within the hospital." The same preposition is used, which may mean emergence, but it does not mean emergence when used with the verb "keep."<sup>57</sup> The English and Greek terms in this instance are approximately the same. The only other use of τηρέω ἐκ in the NT occurs in John 17:15, the passage mentioned earlier.

*Τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15.* There is "one other place in biblical Greek"<sup>58</sup> where the expression τηρέω ἐκ occurs. This should give us some indication of the meaning in Rev 3:10. However, here is another place where Gundry's arguments are logically inconsistent. He states that τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15 is in "full contrast and opposition" to ἄρῃς . . . ἐκ, an "exact description of what the rapture will be;" and therefore τηρέω ἐκ cannot refer to the "rapture or the result of the rapture."<sup>59</sup> This sounds reasonable only if we can forget Gundry's conclusions on Rev 3:10, the verse in question. He has argued that τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 is protection issuing in emission (rapture) at the final crisis of the tribulation. In other words, he argues that τηρέω ἐκ specifically describes a posttribulational rapture. When discussing John 17:15, however, he argues that since τηρέω ἐκ does not refer to a rapture in John 17:15, therefore, in Rev 3:10 it cannot refer to the rapture or result of the rapture at all. We ask: if it is impossible for the expression τηρέω ἐκ to refer to the rapture or the result of the rapture in Rev 3:10 as Gundry states, then how can it at the same time refer to a situation where "ἐκ lays all the emphasis on emergence, in this verse on the final, victorious outcome of the keeping-guarding," that is, to the rapture as Gundry also states.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup>Gundry is less than careful when he argues that such expressions as "saved from" the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer 30:7), which uses a verb implying motion and meaning "save," do not imply prior removal, therefore, τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10, an expression using a different verb, not implying motion, does not (p. 60).

<sup>58</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 58-59.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 59. It is clear that Gundry means τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 since he differentiates it from its only other occurrence in John 17:15.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 57.

This is enough time spent on this incredible contradiction. Let us look at Gundry's statement that *τηρέω ἐκ* in John 17:15 is in full contrast and opposition to *ἄρῃς . . . ἐκ* in the same verse.<sup>61</sup> He concludes from this that since *ἄρῃς ἐκ* means "take up" and would fit the idea of rapture, then *τηρέω ἐκ* cannot refer "to the rapture or result of the rapture."

Such handling of the passage can hardly be considered exegesis since *ἄρῃς ἐκ* does not oppose or contrast with *τηρέω ἐκ* as he claims. Jesus prays "I do not pray that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from evil (the evil one)." The contrast is not between "take out" and "keep out," but between the entire phrase "take out of the world" and the phrase "keep from the evil one." How Gundry can suppose that a contrast, even as he proposes, is support for his view is amazing. "Take out" (*ἄρῃς ἐκ*) means removal from the sphere in question, emergence from the world. As Gundry says, this will fit the rapture. On the other hand, *τηρέω ἐκ* contrasts in that there is no idea of emergence involved; rather, the people are "kept from" or "kept away from" the evil one.

That this is the most obvious meaning for *τηρέω ἐκ* in John 17:15 may be seen by comparison with other verses parallel in meaning to John 17:15, such as Matt 6:13; Luke 11:4 (Majority Text), and 2 Thess 3:3. All say either "rescue" or "keep" *ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*. Gundry states that *ἀπὸ* would be the preposition used in Rev 3:10 if "away from" or separation in the sense of entirely away from were meant. These three verses use *ἀπὸ* with "the evil (one)" and therefore by Gundry's own admission mean separation from the evil (one), not emergence.

Let us apply Gundry's interpretation of *τηρέω ἐκ* in Rev 3:10 to the same phrase in John 17:15. This verse would then read "I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but that you keep them for a long period in evil (or the 'evil one') and at some final crisis physically snatch them out of it." In other words keep them in evil until the rapture and finally rapture them. When we realize that for Gundry the "keeping-guarding" in the tribulation means that only a remnant survive and most perish, such a meaning for John 17:15 is even more remote, since this would allow most to perish or succumb to the evil.

This is a strange form of keeping or protecting from evil and obviously cannot be the meaning of the passage. In a context where the Lord refers to the hatred of the world (the disciples are viewed as those in "enemy territory"), he then states, "I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to keep [or guard] them from the evil one." The evil must refer to "the evil one" or the opposition of

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 59.

evil in this context. If the Lord was thinking of emergence from the evil one or from the principle of evil, the use of αἴρω would make a perfect play on words with the preceding statement. However, he is not thinking of removal, but of “keeping or guarding from” the evil. The meaning of “evil one” seems to best fit the context. If the concept of sphere (the sphere of evil, the world) were in view, a natural word play could be obtained by contrasting “I do not ask that you take them out of the world” (ἄρῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου) with the statement “keep them from the world” (τηρήσεις αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου). Whether or not the disciples were in “the evil one,” or “the evil” at one time is not the issue. As has been shown, the verb τηρέω cannot be used with ἐκ to imply emergence since no concept of motion or “deliverance out of” is in view. Τηρέω ἐκ does not refer to emergence from the “evil one” or the “evil” in John 17:15. The impossibility of τηρέω ἐκ occurring with such a meaning, the contrast with the previous statement where emergence from the world is stated, the awkwardness of viewing the verse in its context in such a way, and the natural meaning of “separation from” in the verse all are against such an interpretation.

The obvious meaning of τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15 perfectly corresponds with the pretribulational view of its meaning in Rev 3:10. The pretribulational view does not require that τηρέω ἐκ refer directly to the rapture, something which is required by Gundry’s view, although he also says it cannot. The pretribulational view merely requires that τηρέω ἐκ means “keep from,” in other words, not allow the church to “be in” the tribulation. There is no direct statement of motion or emergence. This “keeping from” is accomplished by or the result of the rapture; it is not the rapture itself. We know that it is a result of the rapture from other contexts, not due to the terminology here. Gundry’s contention that τηρέω ἐκ cannot refer to the rapture is no problem to other views; it makes his impossible. The preposition ἐκ with the verb τηρέω cannot imply emergence. Emergence is not in view in John 17:15, neither does τηρέω imply presence in. Τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15, the only other NT occurrence of this expression, means “keep out of” or “away from” the evil, and confirms the findings regarding Rev 3:10.

### *The inclusion of ὥρα is significant*

If the word ὥρα were omitted from Rev 3:10, the promise would read, “I will keep you from the trial which is coming upon the entire inhabited earth to try the earth dwellers.” The verse would still support the pretribulational rapture, i.e., a keeping from an earth-wide tribulation. However, the inclusion of ὥρα (“hour”) makes it even clearer.

Gundry's arguments on the word are more of a smoke screen than a serious attempt to understand the passage. He argues that since time goes on in heaven the church cannot be delivered from the time of the tribulation. The word ὥρα in Rev 3:10 is not strictly referring to a chronological hour, however, but to a "period" or "time." Specifically, it refers to a "period of trial" or "time of trial" which is coming upon the entire inhabited *earth* to try those dwelling on the *earth*. Rev 3:10 says that the church is removed from a period of trial which occurs upon the earth, that is, not from some of the events, but from the entire trial or time of trial. No one has claimed that they are removed from chronological time, nor does anyone claim they are removed from, say, 1982-1989. Gundry's statements would mean that God could not remove anyone from a time of trial since time goes on in heaven. The same argument would preclude a direct statement "I will remove you from the tribulation period" or "I will remove you from the tribulation" (which by definition is a period of time).

Gundry argues that Jesus did not pray for deliverance from a period of time when he prayed "Father save me from this hour" (John 12:27) since he would have gone through the time even had he not died.<sup>62</sup> Gundry further states that Jesus is asking for deliverance from the events within the period of time. It is certain that Jesus is not asking to be protected or saved through the time and events of the crucifixion; he asks that the event not take place.

This verse lends no support at all for Gundry's view that τηρέω ἐκ ὥρας means that the church will be protected through the events of the tribulation. Jesus is speaking about a future event scheduled by God. He requests that this event be canceled. There was no other possibility of deliverance. However, it was not canceled, but occurred as prophesied. Neither can he be asking to be delivered by being resurrected after dying, since there could be no question in his mind regarding this. Such a concept would not fit the following phrase: "But for this reason I came to this hour." The entire context refers to his death and indicates a travail of soul. This verse parallels his prayer in Gethsemane. Jesus actually says, "I am troubled; should I pray to be excused from the cross? But this is the reason I came." He did not differentiate the event and the time as in Rev 3:10. The time and event are both included in the term "hour."

In Rev 3:10, however, the expression is the "hour of trial." The stress is on the time (period). If Jesus was promising "deliverance from the events" of the tribulation period, as Gundry views ὥρα,<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

why add a specific word for time and not just say, "I will keep you from the trials"? However, Gundry fails to handle the details of the verse. The "time of trial" is the term. The *events* of the time of trial are not equivalent only to the trials. The events of a period of time include *all* events in that period. If the word ὥρα ("hour") were omitted, the expression could refer only to the trials themselves. The inclusion of ὥρα means that Jesus promised exemption from all of the events, that is, from the entire period of trials, not merely from certain events categorized as trials. Even if we use Gundry's idea that the events are in view, Rev 3:10 requires a keeping from all the events of the tribulation. There is no basis for exemption (or protection) only from some of the events. Whether ὥρα refers to a period or the events of a period, its inclusion is significant and precludes Gundry's view of Rev 3:10.

The scope of the trial also argues against the view that the church will be on earth and yet somehow avoid even the events which are called trials. The time of trial is on the *earth* and on the *entire* inhabited earth. Therefore, a keeping from the trials would require either a cancelation of the events or a removal from the earth. Removal from the earth does not remove from chronological time, it is true, but it does remove from a *period* of trial which occurs *on the earth* as Rev 3:10 describes it. This use of "time" is a common idiom in language. Gundry as usual is less than accurate when he states, "to pray, say, for deliverance from a time of illness is not to ask that one be taken out of the world before he becomes ill,—he is already ill—but that the Lord should preserve and bring him safely out of the period of illness."<sup>64</sup> He fails to grasp the fact that τηρέω, even by his own definition, does not mean "deliver," a verb which would imply emergence. It means "keep." If someone prays that he be "kept from a time" of illness, particularly when he is not yet in the time, he is not asking for preservation and safe delivery through it, but that it not take place. Neither is he asking that chronological time be canceled.

Jesus promised in Rev 3:10 that the believers will be "kept from" the tribulation period. It is clear from prophecy that the events will not be canceled. If they were, everyone would be kept from the period. The only alternative, one which fits the natural idiom of language, is removal from the earth prior to the period of the events. Such a removal from the earth has not happened at other times in history and seems unusual. However, we know that removal of believers from the earth will occur at the rapture; therefore, it is not at all out of place to see that it fits perfectly in Rev 3:10 as the means of keeping believers from a time of trial upon the entire earth.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.



To approach it from another aspect, in terms of Gundry's statement that the deliverance is not from the time but from the events of the period, how can the church be delivered or protected from the events of a time of trial which is on the entire inhabited earth and remain on earth? How can the church be delivered from the tribulation period with its awful destruction and intensity which destroys in some cases one-third of the earth's population at one time and still remain on earth? How can they be delivered from a time when everyone who does not worship the beast is hunted down and killed, and still be on earth? How can they be delivered from a time which is so terrible that everyone would perish unless "those days were cut short," and still be on earth? How can they be delivered from a time in which almost all believers are killed, and still be on earth?

If one is given a promise to be *kept from* a "time of illness," he is not expecting to go through it. He expects that he will not be in a period of time characterized as a time of illness. He is not expecting to be delivered from chronological time. He certainly does not expect to be protected in the sense of to barely survive or not even to survive a period of intense illness. To be "kept from the hour [ὥρα] of tribulation" does not mean to go through it but to be kept from a period known as the tribulation. The "hour of trial" is a term describing a period of trial or tribulation. It is the same as the term "the tribulation period." Rev 3:10 says, "I shall keep you from the tribulation period."

Whether "the events of the period" or the time of the events is stressed does not help Gundry's view. Jesus promises not "deliverance" from but "keeping" from the period (or the events of a period of time) which affects the entire earth. Gundry's strange idea of protection or deliverance from the events is that the church will experience the trials and troubles but will not be wiped out entirely. Is this really deliverance from the events of the tribulation period? Since the events will not be canceled, the only way the church can be delivered from the events is to be removed geographically. Since the events are worldwide, this requires removal from the world, i.e., rapture.

God has promised to keep the church from that "hour" which will try the entire earth. Rapture is the obvious way, and is promised to the church. To be kept from the events of the tribulation period means from all, not from a select few. This requires removal from the entire period. Therefore, whether τηρέω ἐκ . . . ὥρας means "kept from the time" or "from the events," the result is the same. The word ὥρα does reinforce the fact that this is inclusive, that is, exclusion from *all* the events.



*Gundry's conclusion is inconsistent with the promise aspect of Rev 3:10 and a positive purpose for the rapture*

The promise of being kept from the "hour of tribulation" is a promise of hope or reward. Gundry, however, has the church going through the tribulation period. It is exposed to most of the troubles. The "protection" promised according to Gundry is protection of the church in a corporate sense, i.e., it will not be completely eliminated. But neither will the unbelievers. Jesus said that he will come back and terminate the period; otherwise, everyone would be eliminated.

According to Gundry, the church only misses God's wrath at the precise end of the tribulation. But the Bible pictures the tribulation period as the greatest time of trouble on the earth. The book of Revelation indicates that believers will be specially tried and suffer. To promise that "I will keep you" in the sense that you will suffer terribly, more than other generations of believers and most will be killed, but that I will keep a remnant, seems hollow. This seems particularly so if the "kept" remnant is raptured along with the dead saints right before the hoped-for millennium. What can be the purpose for keeping a remnant alive through the tribulation so that some of the church survive and then take them out of their situation and make them the same as those who did not survive? Why keep them for this? Gundry's explanation, that they provide an escort for Jesus, does not hold up. Raptured living saints will be exactly the same as resurrected dead saints. Why cannot the dead believers fulfill this purpose? Why keep a remnant alive, then rapture them and accomplish no more than by letting them die? There is no purpose or accomplishment in a rapture such as Gundry's view promotes.

With all of the saints of all the ages past and the armies in heaven available as escorts and the fact that translated saints provide no different escort than if they had been killed, why permit the church to suffer immensely, most believers be killed, and spare a few for a rapture which has no apparent purpose, immediately before the period ends? Gundry even calls this a "victorious" emergence. This emergence comes just before the end of the tribulation and just before the long-awaited millennial kingdom is set up, where peace and righteousness reign, where sickness, etc., are less, and where all know of the Lord. Is this the promise? You will suffer, be killed, but I will keep a few alive, and take them out just before the good times come. Such reasoning, of course, calls for some explanation of the apparent lack of purpose for a posttribulation rapture of any sort.

We can note the following:

- (1) An unusual, portentous, one-time event such as the rapture must have a specific purpose. God has purposes for his

actions. This purpose must be one that can be accomplished only by such an unusual event as a rapture of living saints.

- (2) This purpose must agree with God's general principles of operation.
- (3) There is little or no apparent reason to rapture believers when the Lord returns and just prior to setting up the long-awaited kingdom with all of its joyful prospects.
- (4) There is good reason to deliver all who are already believers from the tribulation, where they would be special targets of persecution.
- (5) To deliver from a period of universal trial and physical destruction such as the tribulation requires a removal from the earth by death or rapture. Death is not appropriate as a promise in Rev 3:10.
- (6) Deliverance from the tribulation before it starts agrees with God's previous dealings with Noah and Lot and is directly stated as a principle of God's action toward believers in 2 Pet 2:9 (see discussion below).

The immediate context begins in v 4. The entire section is support for Peter's statement that judgment is certain for false teachers. The reason is stated as a condition. The conditional statement (protasis) begins in v 4 and states, in effect, "if God did not spare the angels who sinned but cast them into hell, and did not spare the ancient world but delivered Noah (φυλάσσω) when he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly, and burned up Sodom and Gomorrah and rescued (ρύομαι) Lot. . . ."<sup>14</sup> (then follows the conclusion, apodosis), "then the Lord knows to rescue the godly out of trial" (ἐκ πειρασμοῦ).

Several things should be noted. (1) Peter states v 9 as a general principle derived from God's past actions. It is clear from God's actions in the past (angels, Noah, Lot, etc.) that this principle follows; he knows to deliver the godly from trial. (2) The word Peter uses in v 9 is πειρασμοῦ, the same word which occurs in Rev 3:10. (3) Since this principle is derived from the past examples of deliverance stated in vv 4-8, it is clear that "trial," πειρασμοῦ, does not mean everyday, routine trials. The trials described are the universal flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The flood was a judgment of God on the entire world. It was a physical judgment, not eternal judgment. This parallels the tribulation period and is described by the same term (πειρασμοῦ). The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a physical judgment from God on the ungodly. The statement that God knows to deliver from "trial," πειρασμοῦ, must mean from times of physical trial intended for the ungodly, a description which fits the tribulation period. (4) Neither Noah nor Lot went through the trial as

did the ungodly. They did not suffer from the trial. Lot was removed from Sodom and Gomorrah (πειρασμοῦ) before the destruction, not after it started. He did not remain in Sodom under some miraculous protection of God.<sup>65</sup> Noah was in the ark before the flood started. He did not remain somehow to be protected miraculously through the flood. Both Noah and Lot were spared the "trial." Both were warned ahead of time.

Gundry attempts to avoid the significance of this verse. He states that "Noah went through and emerged from the flood."<sup>66</sup> But Noah did not swim in the waters for a time and eventually emerge by being fished out. Noah was placed in a physical, geographical place of safety. This is not significantly different from the church being in the air with the Lord and possibly over the earth during the tribulation period. The key to the comparison is not solved by such arguments, however. The issue boils down to one simple question. Did Noah remain in the same situation and suffer the same experiences and trials as the ungodly? The answer is clearly *no*. Before the trial (flood) he was physically delivered from among the ungodly and the trial coming upon them. All of those with Noah survived. Gundry states that Lot's rescue was "not removal, but sheltered protection."<sup>67</sup> Such an obviously incorrect statement is suggested by the feeble argument that Lot "remained within the sphere of judgment in the cities of the plain while the fire and brimstone fell."<sup>68</sup> But the point of the entire story of Lot is that God removed him from Sodom and Gomorrah before he destroyed (judged) the cities.<sup>69</sup> He did not keep him in the cities and protect him from the fire. Lot did not experience the trials that came on the ungodly. Lot was removed from Sodom. God expressly stated that he could not destroy the cities until Lot was safely in Zoar (Gen 19:22). Gen 19:29 says explicitly that God sent Lot "out of the midst of the overthrow" when he destroyed the cities.

Gundry's argument here seem strange since he argues that Noah and Lot were not kept from the trials (πειρασμοῦ). However, it is clear from the OT passages that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the flood were incidents of *God's* wrath or retributive

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 62.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>To argue that ἐκ in 2 Pet 2:9 means emergence (Ibid., 55) completely disregards the biblical account which goes to great lengths to show that God would not allow any wrath on Sodom and Gomorrah until "after" Lot was removed. To argue that he was in the "sphere of judgment in the cities of the plain" (p. 62) is not only innocuous, but merely points out that Lot was removed from the place of judgment prior to the judgment. When the judgment is on the entire earth this requires removal from the earth.

justice. Since Gundry argues elsewhere that believers will not experience God's wrath, why insist in these cases that they did? According to Gundry's own statement, believers are not to experience God's wrath at all. The expression ἐκ πειρασμοῦ ῥύεσθαι (2 Pet 2:9) must mean complete separation according to his statements elsewhere. As we have seen, it does mean that in the case of Noah and Lot. This passage then teaches that God delivers the godly ἐκ πειρασμοῦ and the ungodly are kept for judgment. Since Gundry argues that believers escape divine wrath, he should accept this with no reservation. Why then does he argue against it and contradict himself? This verse is no problem to him if he can maintain his completely artificial distinction between satanic and divine wrath in the tribulation period.

This verse states that ἐκ πειρασμοῦ means complete separation rather than emergence. Therefore, the expression in Rev 3:10 can also mean the same. There is no more reason to differentiate satanic and divine wrath in the tribulation period than there is to differentiate the two in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the flood. Unless this distinction can be maintained, however, then 2 Pet 2:9 teaches that God removes believers from a physical judgment upon earth *before* the judgment.

There is no support in these examples nor in the general principle based on them (2 Pet 2:9) for a strange protection through the trial (πειρασμοῦ), such as Gundry's concept, which is a protection which does not protect but keeps a corporate body from complete annihilation. If Noah experienced this type of protection, he would have had to swim through most of the flood and possibly drown with most of his family, but be "protected" in the sense that God would bring one of the eight safely through. This type of protection would have Lot burned severely but surviving.

Neither is there support in these examples and the general principle derived from them for some kind of protection while undergoing the same events and trials as the ungodly.

The general principle derived from these examples and stated as a principle is that God physically removes believers from among the ungodly *before* he brings such extraordinary physical judgment on the ungodly. The believers do not experience the trial. To sum up: it is a general principle of God's actions to remove believers from among the ungodly *before* he physically brings unusual divine wrath or judgment which is intended for the ungodly. A pretribulational rapture fits God's way of dealing with believers. Rev 3:10 is not only clear, but coincides with God's way of doing things. Any other time for the rapture does not.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>70</sup>To argue that since believers are in the tribulation period this principle does not hold true is to miss the point that *all* believers are removed prior to the tribulation;

### Conclusion

Gundry's idea of protection amounts to none at all. But what can the *promise of hope* in Rev 3:10 mean if it is posttribulational? It is clear that saints in the tribulation period are not protected, but suffer intensely. Neither is there any apparent purpose for a rapture if it is posttribulational. Why not let the living saints go on into the millennium and die normal deaths as those of other ages?

Posttribulationism does not fit Rev 3:10 or 2 Pet 2:9 and it is not logical.<sup>71</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Gundry's view of Rev 3:10 obviously is impossible. The verb τηρέω cannot imply "in" when used with the preposition ἐκ meaning "out." Ἐκ does not necessarily imply emergence, and when used with τηρέω, a verb which has no indication of motion, it cannot. The expression τηρέω ἐκ can only mean "keep from," in the sense of "separate from." The inclusion of the expression "hour of trial which is to come upon the entire inhabited earth" has been shown to require removal or rapture rather than "keeping" in the sense of protection on the earth. The fact that "protection" of the saints on earth is contrary to the description of what happens to believers during the tribulation period precludes the idea of protection within the period. That Rev 3:10 is a promise of reward in the sense of deliverance also precludes the concept that Rev 3:10 means most saints will suffer intensely, worse than ever before, but a few will survive.

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however, the effects of the period do result in some being saved *during* that time but after the rapture has occurred.

<sup>71</sup>Some have recognized the force of the Greek more accurately than Gundry and tried to argue that passages such as Gal 1:4 use ἐκ with an expression of time when the believers are still in the time of trial (e.g., G. E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956] 85). Gal 1:4 states: "Who gave Himself for our sins in order to deliver us (ἐξέλθῃται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος) out of the present evil age." Several things should be noted regarding Gal 1:4. The verb "deliver" is used rather than "keep." Furthermore, the expression does not describe protection or presence within as claimed. It is also unlikely that Christ died *for the purpose of* protecting us during the present. He died to save from sins in the eternal sense. To take it as the purpose of "protecting us from this evil age" at present would require a highly figurative view since saints are not kept from sin or from the evils of this world in a literal sense. One possibility is that Gal 1:4 refers to Christ's ultimate purpose to deliver believers from the age in the eschatological sense, a common view of this verse. But this would mean physical "deliverance out" and would, therefore, not be an example of ἐκ with a time expression describing presence in the time. It could mean emergence, but with τηρέω in Rev 3:10 rather than the verb in Gal 1:4 emergence is not probable. Another possibility is to regard Gal 1:4 as figurative, but then the figure still refers to the *figure* of actual deliverance from or out of rather than "presence in."



The idea that τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 indicates protection or preservation in the hour of trial has been shown as highly improbable, even impossible. Some have argued that it refers to a figurative rather than actual keeping. But what kind of promise is a figurative deliverance from literal trials which does not literally deliver at all? In addition, there is no evidence for taking this as a figure. Nothing in the surrounding context is figurative; all of it is very literal, i.e., the wrath, the people, the prophesied time, etc. The events are prophesied *facts*. The promise of deliverance must rest on a literal deliverance or it is not a promise. A deliverance from the entire earth might seem figurative, except for the fact that such a literal deliverance is promised in the time frame of the events described in Rev 3:10. There is no reason to regard the promise as a figure and, in effect, a figurative promise would be no promise at all when the literal fact (intense persecution) is clearly prophesied to be contrary to a figurative deliverance *during* the period.

This lengthy discussion involves Gundry's handling of only one verse, Rev 3:10. To point out the numerous similar discrepancies and *non sequitur* nature of his book would take many pages and be relatively not worth the effort. It is hoped that readers may pay attention to the details and note the obvious discrepancies, for example, the statements on pp. 57 and 58 of Gundry's book arguing that τηρέω and ἐκ imply immediate presence of danger. The words may often be used in such a context, but the words themselves imply nothing regarding proximity of danger. Some languages such as Kiowa, which developed in a hunting, warlike culture, have words meaning "to hear something near" and another word meaning "to hear something far away," but there is no such implication in τηρέω and ἐκ in the Greek language. Such statements by Gundry may seem scholarly to a novice, but are completely empty of evidential value to someone familiar with language. Gundry's arguments explaining why the preposition διὰ, the obvious choice if a posttribulational rapture is in view, is not used<sup>72</sup> are not arguments at all.<sup>73</sup> They are merely a series of dogmatic pronouncements without argumentation. They are based on his impossible, self-contradictory meaning for τηρέω ἐκ. He argues that διὰ would distribute the emphasis throughout the period. What is wrong with this? As we have seen, it is impossible to emphasize two separate actions with τηρέω ἐκ, as he does. Therefore τηρέω with a preposition must put the emphasis on one aspect or the

<sup>72</sup>Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57-58.

<sup>73</sup>In an unpublished "Open letter to John F. Walvoord," Gundry regards this as dealing "thoroughly" with the issue. However, he does not "deal" with it at all.



other. For posttribulationism, the obvious place to emphasize protection is through (διὰ) the period. It cannot be emphasizing protection out or emerging (ἐκ).

A further word of caution is in order. Gundry has not merely argued for a chronological change of the rapture of seven years with other issues remaining the same. To uphold his view Gundry has been forced to regard Matthew 25 as a reference to the eternal kingdom rather than the millennium. What does this do to other passages such as Matthew 13? He has also reinterpreted other passages. A different position regarding the rapture affects many passages. His "exegesis" affects even more. Any attempt to refute a clear biblical statement, such as Rev 3:10, will of course require dubious exegesis.



# THE SHEEP MERCHANTS OF ZECHARIAH 11

THOMAS J. FINLEY

*The MT of Zech 11:7 has a phrase which has been translated "hence the afflicted of the flock" (NASB). A nearly identical sequence of consonants occurs in v 11 and has been read, "thus the afflicted of the flock." A survey of the versions and various interpretations shows a great deal of confusion over what the Hebrew actually meant. Further analysis reveals that the grammatical structure of both passages is unique in Hebrew. Therefore, an examination is made of a variant in the LXX which points to the phrase, "sheep merchants," in both passages. It is shown how the LXX gives the more difficult reading. Finally, analysis of the context shows that the LXX reading fits better than that of the MT.*

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**Z** ECHARIAH 11 is one of the more difficult passages of a sometimes enigmatic book. The chapter has been challenging to many because of its high demands on the interpreter's abilities in hermeneutics, language skills, and command of other prophetic passages. Modern commentators have even found a knowledge of Sumerian literature helpful for a new insight on the familiar "thirty shekels of silver."<sup>1</sup>

No less help has been found through the ancient versions. The debate still rages concerning the Greek and Syriac translations of the Hebrew term יָצַר,<sup>2</sup> but a more far-reaching issue which involves the versions is the phrase לִכְן עֲנִי הַצֹּאֵן in v 7 and כֵּן עֲנִי הַצֹּאֵן in v 11.

<sup>1</sup>The phrase occurs in the Sumerian "The Curse of Agade" as a sign of contempt (ANET [3rd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University, 1969] 648, line 104). See E. Reiner, "Thirty Pieces of Silver," *Essays in Memory of E. A. Speiser* (ed. W. W. Hallo; AOS 53; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1968) 186-90.

<sup>2</sup>For a good summary of the three main views with reference to other literature see Joyce Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Tyndale OT Commentaries; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1972) 185-86.

There are two conflicting interpretations of these phrases which may be illustrated by the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) rendition compared with that of the RSV:

- NASB: v 7—"hence the afflicted of the flock"  
           v 11—"thus the afflicted of the flock"  
 RSV: v 7—"for those who trafficked in the sheep"  
           v 11—"the traffickers in the sheep"

The RSV interpretation is listed in the margin of the NASB as "another reading."

Obviously, the two renderings are widely divergent. In the one case the flock itself is being discussed, while in the other the subject is those who control the flock through merchandising. Surely a correct interpretation of the passage must hinge on the right decision about this issue.

Actually, the difference between the readings depends on a variant found only in the LXX. The Greek translator, apparently baffled by the Hebrew, simply transliterated the crucial portions:

- v 7—εἰς τὴν Χαναανῖτιν ("for the Canaanites")  
 v 11—οἱ Χαναανοὶ τὰ πρόβατα ("the Canaanites [shall know] the sheep").<sup>3</sup>

If the words of the MT are divided differently, it is possible to derive the LXX reading:

- v 7—לְכַנְעִי (הַצֹּאֵן)  
 v 11—כְּנַעֲנִי הַצֹּאֵן

The crucial point for the RSV interpretation (adopted also by the NEV and the JB, among others) is that the term "Canaanite" can bear the meaning "merchant." The BDB lexicon lists the meaning "merchant" under both כְּנַעֲנִי (Ezek 16:29; 17:4; Zeph 1:11) and כְּנַעֲנִי (Prov 31:24; Zech 14:21). The development is explained, "because Canaanites, esp. Phoenicians, were traders."<sup>4</sup> A. Haldar, writing on "Canaanites" in the *IDB*, adds Isa 23:8 and Hos 12:8 (Eng. v 7). Additionally, he cites the inscription of Amenophis II, which contains the expression *kyn'n.w* in close connection with the *maryana*, "the Hurrian military aristocracy." Haldar concludes, "If *kny'n.w* is the

<sup>3</sup>There is some variation within the Greek manuscripts. See the edition by J. Ziegler for details (*Septuaginta* [vol. 13; Duodecim prophetae; 2d ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967] 315-16).

<sup>4</sup>BDB (reprinted; Oxford: Clarendon, 1975) 488.

designation of a social group, it would most likely be the class of merchants."<sup>5</sup>

Many recent commentators adopt the LXX reading and interpret the term "Canaanite" as "merchant." Rudolph notes that the MT is "meaningless," as a comparison with the Syriac, Vg, and possibly the Targum shows, and that the Greek points to the correct solution. He explains the development of the MT form as due to the negative attitude toward the "Canaanite" in Zech 14:21.<sup>6</sup> According to Joyce Baldwin, the reading "has found general acceptance."<sup>7</sup>

Yet there are some moderns who still prefer the MT. Among them are Feinberg,<sup>8</sup> Unger,<sup>9</sup> and Leupold.<sup>10</sup> Unger has the strongest statement against the LXX reading: "But this reading, besides being linguistically weak, glibly avoiding a difficult but correct reading, is colorless in its meaning. . . ."<sup>11</sup>

The issue is still open and a detailed examination of the problem is imperative. In what follows I hope to raise some important issues that to my knowledge have not been considered previously and to discuss the different implications of the two readings.

#### THE MT

Of first consideration is the MT. Can the passage in question be interpreted in a manner which is exegetically sound? Is the judgment of David Baron true? "But the Hebrew text in this place [11:7 specifically though later applied to 11:11] needs no emendation or alteration when properly understood."<sup>12</sup> Two lines of evidence will be examined. First, what are the various ways in which the verses have been interpreted? Second, is the reading of the MT grammatically feasible?

#### *The poor of the flock*

The expression which is common to both passages, עֲנִיִּי הַצֹּאֵן, is the easiest to explain. Wherever the MT has been followed, the phrase has been taken to mean "the poor (ones) of the flock." The

<sup>5</sup>Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962) 494.

<sup>6</sup>W. Rudolph, *Haggai—Sacharja 1-8—Sacharja 9-14—Maleachi* (KAT 13:4; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1976) 202.

<sup>7</sup>*Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 180.

<sup>8</sup>*God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah* (3rd ed.; Portland: Multnomah, 1977) 204-5.

<sup>9</sup>*Zechariah: Prophet of Messiah's Glory* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963) 194.

<sup>10</sup>*Exposition of Zechariah* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1956) 210.

<sup>11</sup>*Zechariah*, 194.

<sup>12</sup>*The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1919) 391, n. 2.

only controversy is whether the entire flock or only a portion of it is meant. According to the former view, the use of the adjective in construct is for the superlative.<sup>13</sup> Wright translates "the most miserable flock" and says, "It is a description not merely of a certain portion of the sheep, but of the flock in general."<sup>14</sup> The Targum on v 11 points toward the other interpretation: "And they knew, so the humble ones, the poor of the people who had done my will, that it was the word of the LORD."<sup>15</sup> A note in *The New Scofield Reference Bible* gives a similar interpretation:

(11:11) The "poor of the flock" i.e. the "remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5), are those Jews who did not wait for the manifestation of Christ in glory but believed on Him at His first coming and subsequently. Of them it is said that they "waited upon me," and "knew."<sup>16</sup>

In other words, the flock as a whole rejected the shepherd's ministry, but "the poor (ones) of the flock" accepted him.

It is not necessary to decide the issue here. What is important, however, is that the main part of the phrase in question in both verses has a meaning which is obvious to anyone familiar with Hebrew. Yet, the very naturalness of the expression could be deceptive. The easy translation of עֲנִי הֶצֹאן could obscure any difficulty with the conjunctions לֵכֶן and כֵּן which are used.

### *The particle לֵכֶן*

First we will treat לֵכֶן of v 7. At least four different interpretations have been given. These may be classified as asseverative, conjunctive, prepositional, and pronominal. The asseverative interpretation is known from David Kimchi's commentary, which was written about 1300. Kimchi comments: "'And I will feed truly the poor of the flock,' לֵכֶן—In truth the poor of the flock I found them, when I took them to feed."<sup>17</sup> Henderson, a commentator of the last century, adopts this view also. He takes the ל as being "redundant" and derives כֵּן from the Arabic *kwn* ("to be"), which "implies reality,

<sup>13</sup>See GKC (2d Eng. ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1910) §133g, h.

<sup>14</sup>C. H. H. Wright, *Zechariah and His Prophecies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1879; reprinted, Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1980) 325.

<sup>15</sup>My translation from A. Sperber (ed.), *The Bible in Aramaic* (vol. 3, The Latter Prophets according to Targum Jonathon; Leiden: Brill, 1962).

<sup>16</sup>New York: Oxford University, 1967.

<sup>17</sup>A. M'Caul (translator), *Rabbi David Kimchi's Commentary upon the Prophecies of Zechariah* (London: James Duncan, 1837) 121.



*certainty*, or the like, but admits of being variously rendered, according to the context in which it is found.”<sup>18</sup> Taken with the ל the meaning would be “with respect to truth, i.e., truly.”<sup>19</sup> The KB lexicon gives the meaning *fürwahr* or *wohlan* (“truly,” “in truth”) for לִכֶּן in Judg 8:7 and 1 Sam 28:2. A cross reference listed in KB suggests a connection with a possible, though “*sehr fraglich*,” affirmative לָא.<sup>20</sup> The BDB lexicon connects these passages with an idiom “in conversation, in reply to an objection, to state the ground upon which the answer is made.”<sup>21</sup> Additional examples cited are Gen 4:15; 30:15; Judg 11:8; 1 Kgs 22:19; and Job 20:2. None of these examples have a structure which is similar to Zech 11:7. Wright may be too strong when he says that the word לִכֶּן “never elsewhere” has the meaning “truly,”<sup>22</sup> but the usage would be unique for a passage with the overall structure of Zech 11:7.

Another explanation takes לִכֶּן as a conjunction which introduces a closer specification of the “flock of slaughter.” It is reflected in the NASB translation: “So I pastured the flock *doomed* to slaughter, hence the afflicted of the flock.” Wright describes the reason for the use of לִכֶּן: “The latter designation [עֲנִי הַצֹּאן] expresses that which is a logical deduction from the very name just given to them, אֶת-צֹאן הָרֶגֶה; for because they were ‘a flock of slaughter,’ ‘slaughtered’ and not ‘fed’ by their shepherds, therefore they were ‘the most miserable flock.’”<sup>23</sup>

Jerome’s Vg takes לִכֶּן as a conjunction which evidently refers back to vv 5 and 6. Then the “poor of the flock” is rendered as a vocative: *et pascam pecus occisionis propter hoc o pauperes gregis*.<sup>24</sup> The thought is, “and I will pasture the flock of slaughter; on account of this [that is, on account of the wretched conditions described in vv 5 and 6] O poor ones of the flock.” Such a use of conjunctive לִכֶּן would be without precedent.

A factor which has been overlooked by many is the syntactic structure of the first half of v 7. If לִכֶּן is a conjunction, then it joins a clause with a verb to a construct noun phrase. A check of Mandelkern’s concordance<sup>25</sup> convinced me that such a case would be unique.

<sup>18</sup>E. Henderson, *The Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1845) 421.

<sup>19</sup>Henderson, *The Twelve*, 421.

<sup>20</sup>Pp. 466, 482.

<sup>21</sup>P. 487.

<sup>22</sup>*Zechariah*, 578.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.* See also Feinberg, *God Remembers*, 204.

<sup>24</sup>*Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* (ed. R. Weber and others; vol. 2; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969).

<sup>25</sup>S. Mandelkern, *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae; Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae* (revised by F. Margolis; Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1977; [reprint of 1925 edition]).

The verses that Keil cites as parallels for his rendering "therewith" (Isa 26:14; 61:7; Jer 2:33)<sup>26</sup> are not really parallel syntactically. The closest comparison I could find is the frequent expression לִכְן נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה. The term נֶאֱמַר is a noun ("utterance"), but the quotation of Yahweh which follows is to be taken as the predicate. Another possibility is to take 11:7 as elliptical: "therefore (I fed) the poor of the flock." But there are no other examples of לִכְן introducing a clause with ellipsis of a verb (or of a nominal predicate).

A third way in which לִכְן has been translated in v 7 is as a preposition. The particle לִכְן cannot be used as a preposition, but despite this the Peshiṭta translated: "And I shepherded the small flock for the sake of [*meṭul*] the assembly of the flock."<sup>27</sup> The form *meṭul* is usually combined with a demonstrative or the particle *dē* when it translates לִכְן.

Some editions of the Rabbinic Bible have a notation in the *Masora parva* that לִכְן is a feminine word (לשון נקבה).<sup>28</sup> The notation is not in the manuscript which is the basis for BHS. According to this interpretation the term is not a conjunction but the preposition ל with a second feminine plural suffix. The result is that "the poor of the flock" are addressed directly (as also in the Vg). The KJV apparently followed a similar tradition: "And I will feed the flock of slaughter, *even* you, O poor of the flock." This translation ignores the preposition completely, however. There is also a grammatical problem with this view. The vocative noun is a construct phrase of which the governing noun is masculine plural. Therefore there would not be proper agreement with לִכְן as preposition plus feminine pronominal suffix.

### *The particle כֵּן*

The various translations that have been given of v 7 suggest a certain amount of confusion. For v 11 the possibilities are more limited. The particle כֵּן can mean only "so" or "thus" in the present context. It connects the act of breaking the first staff with the realization that there was some relationship to "the word of the LORD." The Syriac does not translate כֵּן; otherwise there is no hint of any difficulty that the versions (other than the LXX) had with the passage. Perhaps the unusual word order and the possibility for the

<sup>26</sup> *Minor Prophets* (Commentary on the OT in 10 Volumes by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, 10; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973 [reprint]) 361.

<sup>27</sup> My translation from *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshiṭta Version* (Part 3, fasc. 4, Dodekapropheton—Daniel—Bel-Draco; Leiden: Brill, 1980).

<sup>28</sup> For example, מִקְרָאוֹת גְּדוּלוֹת (vol. 10, עֶשֶׂר תָּרִי עֶשֶׂר; New York: Pardes, 1951).

conjunction *w* to function in the same sense as Hebrew כֵּן led the translator of the Syriac to omit any equivalent rendering.

It is the unusual word order (the Hebrew is literally, "and they knew, thus the poor of the flock") that is, however, crucial to the problem. The term כֵּן can function in one of two ways. It may serve as a constituent of a clause, usually as the object. An example is a clause of the type: כֵּן וַיַּעַשׂ יַעֲקֹב כֵּן ("and Jacob did so." [Gen 39:28]). This cannot be the function of כֵּן in Zech 11:11. If it were, the objective clause which follows ("that it was the word of Yahweh") would have to clarify the content of כֵּן: "And they knew so, that it was the word of Yahweh."<sup>29</sup> However, in this usage of כֵּן, the particle refers back to something mentioned or implied previously in the context, not forward. In some cases the reference can be both backward and forward, but never forward only (see Isa 20:2; Ezek 12:7).

The second function of כֵּן is as a conjunction meaning "so" or "thus." But wherever כֵּן has this function it is always the first word in the clause, though it may be preceded by the conjunction וְ. In other words, the structure of כֵּן וַיַּעַשׂ points to the meaning of כֵּן as an object, not as a conjunction.

Only two passages might be interpreted as exceptions to this pattern, and both have the verb "to be" as the predicate. They are Exod 10:10 and Amos 5:14, and in both cases the NASB translated כֵּן as a conjunction introducing the verb which it follows:

Exod 10:10 יְהִי כֵּן יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם

Thus may the LORD be with you.

Amos 5:14 וַיְהִי־כֵן יְהוָה . . . אֶתְכֶם כְּאֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתֶּם

And thus may the LORD . . . be with you, Just as you have said!

An alternate translation of Exod 10:10 is given by Keil and Delitzsch, "Be it so; Jehovah be with you. . . ."<sup>30</sup> In this case כֵּן functions as a clause constituent and points back to Moses' statement in v 9. The vacillation on the part of Pharaoh then becomes clear. First, he tells Moses to go and worship Yahweh, but he wants to know who will be going. Moses then says that everyone will go. To this Pharaoh at first assents ("Be it so"), but on reflection he changes his mind ("Not so[!] Go then, you men, and serve Jehovah").<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Cf. the reading by W. H. Lowe, "And they knew that it was so [viz.] that, &c." (*The Hebrew Student's Commentary on Zechariah* [London: MacMillan, 1882] 100).

<sup>30</sup>*The Pentateuch* (Commentary on the OT in Ten Volumes, I; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973 [reprint]) 494-95.

<sup>31</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, 495; translation theirs.

Similar constructions with the verb הָיָה are frequent (Gen 1:7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30; Exod 10:14; Judg 6:38; 2 Kgs 7:20; 15:12; 2 Chr 1:12). The Vg is similar to the NASB rendering (*sic Dominus sit vobiscum*), while the LXX and Syriac translate in the same manner as Keil and Delitzsch. The latter translation seems superior because it makes a better connection with v 9 and because it follows the normal word order rule.

Amos 5:14 has been translated in two ways which differ from the NASB. The NEB and JB take כֵּן as an adverb:

*NEB:* that the LORD . . . may be firmly on your side.

*JB:* and that Yahweh . . . may really be with you.

Such a rendering finds some support from the KB lexicon, which classifies כֵּן into two entries, one of which can have the meanings "fest dastehend," "richtig," or "wahr." Against it is the כִּאֲשֶׁר which follows, implying "so . . . just as you say."

Wolff interprets the portion אֲתִקֶּם . . . יְהוָה as a direct quotation of a saying of assurance used in battle. His rendering of the entire verse is as follows: "Seek good, and not evil, that you may stay alive and (that) it may be so—'Yahweh [God of Hosts] is with you!'—just as you say."<sup>32</sup> Grammatically and contextually his suggestion makes good sense.

No certain examples of כֵּן as a conjunction with the verb before it occur in Biblical Hebrew. The construction כֵּן יָדְעוּ most naturally means "and they knew thus," not "and thus they knew." The MT of Zech 11:7 has a reading which is difficult to interpret and which would be grammatically unique. At 11:11 a reading which contains the very same consonants save the initial ל is also unique in its grammatical structure. Surely there is justification for looking to the LXX reading for any help it might offer.

#### THE LXX

For לָכֵן עֲנִי הַצֹּאן in v 7 the Greek has εἰς τὴν Χαναανῖτιν. The translator was obviously baffled by the text. The expression "into the Canaanite (land)" presupposes a text with כֵּן joined to the following word. The omission of הַצֹּאן may be due to the translator's lack of understanding of the term "Canaanite." It was inconceivable to him that the shepherd would have done his work "for the Canaanites of the sheep." So he saw a place-name instead. Later hands made the reference to the "land" of Canaan more explicit by the addition of the

<sup>32</sup>H. W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) 231. The square brackets are his as he takes the expression "God of Hosts" as a later addition.

word γην. The LXX translators were not familiar with the interpretation "merchant" for כַּנְעַן. For all of the references listed above in this connection the translator either ignored the term (Isa 23:8; Ezek 16:29) or transliterated. In one passage (Job 40:30 [Eng. 41:6]) it was interpreted as "Phoenicians" (Φοινίκων).

In v 11 people are clearly in view, so the Greek translator used the term Χανααναῖται ("Canaanites"), reflecting a *Vorlage* of כַּנְעֲנִי.<sup>33</sup> But once again the odious "Canaanites of the flock" was avoided: "And the Canaanites shall know the guarded flock, because it is the word of the Lord." In order to arrive at this reading it was necessary to delete אֲנִי ("me") and read a construct form as absolute. Possibly אֲנִי was read as אָנֹכִי for the direct object, though the word order would be entirely against it.

T. Jansma suggested that the Greek *Vorlage* might have been written with a continuous script with no final letters.<sup>34</sup> That the script had no final forms seems possible, but it is unlikely that it was without word divisions. Word dividers are attested already in Ugaritic texts, and various means of word division are attested throughout the history of Northwest Semitic writing. For some inscriptions, such as those of Sefire,<sup>35</sup> continuous script was used. But a Hebrew Biblical manuscript of the second or third century B.C. would surely have had some form of word division. The Qumran texts contain extra space between words.

If there was liberty to divide the words it is unlikely that the Greek translator would have had such difficulty with the text. It is often stated that the more difficult textual variant is to be preferred. Unger implies that this rule supports the MT,<sup>36</sup> but the opposite is true. Zech 14:21 states that in the future day when God dwells among men as king there will be no more "Canaanite" in the Temple. So how could it be that the prophet envisions the work of the good shepherd as being "for the Canaanites" or that the "Canaanites" would recognize God's word through the prophet? How much more appropriate if those concepts would be ascribed to "the poor of the

<sup>33</sup>The spelling of the gentilic plural alternates between *-im* and *-iyyim*. The latter spelling occurs in אֲנִי כַּנְעָנִי (Exod 3:18). Sometimes the *Ketib* has the consonants for the spelling *\*-iyyim*, but the *Qere* reads *-iym* (אֲנִי כַּנְעָנִי, Esth 4:7). I was unable to locate any examples of a gentilic in construct. This is not unusual, considering that gentilics are not common and are adjectives. However, they often take the article, and the form אֲנִי כַּנְעָנִי ("her merchants," Isa 23:8) has a pronoun suffix.

<sup>34</sup>"Inquiry into the Hebrew Text and the Ancient Versions of Zechariah ix-xiv," OTS 7 (1950) 100.

<sup>35</sup>See S. Segert, *Altaramäische Grammatik* (Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1975) 58.

<sup>36</sup>*Zechariah*, 194.

flock"? The term "poor of the flock" is not attested elsewhere, but the word "poor" is coupled with "people" (Isa 10:2; 14:32; Ps 72:4). In a manuscript without final forms it would have been a simple, unconscious process for the words to be divided wrongly in one verse and then influence the other verse by assimilation. The reverse process of changing the Masoretic reading to the Greek reading seems very difficult to accept.

Both the MT and LXX readings can be traced back to approximately contemporary periods. The MT is supported by all the other ancient versions and is represented in a fragment of a Qumran commentary on Isaiah (4Q163 21). The latter contains parts of two lines quoted from Zech 11:11 and parts of Isa 30:1-5. The editor gives the preserved part of line 7 as כן עניי הצואן ה. From the photograph it is clear that the first two words are indeed כן עניי with a final *nun* and a blank space for a word division.<sup>37</sup>

#### THE CONTEXT OF ZECH 11:4-17

One final issue is the way in which the LXX reading fits into the overall context of Zech 11:4-17. The passage is best described as an allegory in which the prophet is first commanded to represent a shepherd who takes positive action on behalf of his suffering flock.<sup>38</sup> After his rejection he is given a new command to represent a "foolish" or "useless" (אָוֵלִי) shepherd.

The question of the role of the sheep dealers in this passage is interrelated with the role of the other participants. These include Yahweh, the prophet, and the flock. Also of great significance is the relation of Zech 11:4-17 to the rest of Zech 9-14. That is a broader contextual question, and it will be treated first.

Zech 9-14 has an obvious division into two "burdens" or "oracles" (מִשָּׁא).<sup>39</sup> The first burden consists of chaps 9-11. Within these limits chap 11 is clearly distinct from 9-10. There is uncertainty about the reference of 11:1-3, some taking it as a conclusion<sup>40</sup> and others as an introduction.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps the important elements of both views can be maintained by calling it transitional.

<sup>37</sup>J. M. Allegro, *Qumrân Cave 4: I (4Q 158-4Q 186)* (DJD 5; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), pl. 8.

<sup>38</sup>M. Rehm compares the form to Jer 25:15-29 ("Die Hirtenallegorie Zach 11, 4-14," *BZ* 4 [1960] 186). Unger (*Zechariah*, 191) takes it as a symbolic action which was actually carried out; cf. M. Saebø, *Sacharja 9-14; Untersuchungen von Text und Form* (WMANT 34; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969) 234-52.

<sup>39</sup>I take the term in the negative sense (cf. P. A. H. deBoer, "An Inquiry into the Meaning of the Term מִשָּׁא," *OTS* 5 [1948] 197-214).

<sup>40</sup>See Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 177-79; Rudolph, *Sacharja 9-14*, 199-200.

<sup>41</sup>See Feinberg, *God Remembers*, 197-200.



In relation to Israel, chaps 9-10 have a positive tone, while chap 11 is quite negative. The first section can be divided as follows:

1. Judgment on Israel's neighbors (9:1-8)
2. Coming of Israel's king to Jerusalem (9:9-10)
3. Promise of help in battle and other blessings for Israel (9:11-10:12).

After all of these positive assertions it is astonishing to find Israel described as a "flock of slaughter" concerning which Yahweh says, "I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land."

Chaps 12-14 form the second burden. It contains both positive and negative elements dispersed throughout, but there is a significant contrast with the first burden. The emphasis on the entire nation in the latter is unmistakable. The following phrases will illustrate the point:

1. all the tribes of Israel (9:1)
2. Ephraim . . . [and] Jerusalem (9:10)
3. Judah . . . [and] Ephraim (9:13)
4. the house of Judah and . . . the house of Joseph (10:6)
5. the brotherhood between Judah and Israel (11:14)

Therefore it is significant that the second burden is phrased entirely in terms of "Jerusalem," "Judah," or "the house of David." The city of Jerusalem is especially prominent in chaps 12 and 14. Yet the title of the whole section is, "the burden of the word of Yahweh concerning Israel" (12:1).

The reason for the different way in which Israel is viewed in the second burden must be related to the breaking of the second staff in the vision of chap 11. The result of that action was the breaking of "the brotherhood between Judah and Israel." From that point to the end of the book the northern tribes are never mentioned again, except for a possible indirect reference in the term "Israel" in 12:1. It is as though after the events of chap 11 all of the future hopes of the nation are centered on Judah and Jerusalem.

There is another prominent difference between the two burdens. In the second burden there is an emphasis on spiritual cleansing which is entirely absent from the first. Both sections describe divine deliverance of the people in battle, but in the second part there is always movement towards a climax of spiritual cleansing. The following passages illustrate this point:

1. In that day a fountain will be opened . . . for sin and for iniquity (13:1).

2. I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land (13:2).
3. I will bring the third part through fire (13:9).<sup>42</sup>
4. There will be no more curse (14:11).
5. There will be on the bells of the horses, "Holy to Yahweh" (14:20).

The need for this cleansing also hinges on the events of chap 11. Chaps 9-10 have a positive tone of blessing for the whole nation. Chap 11 totally reverses the situation and puts Yahweh in direct conflict with his people. The remainder of the book describes the restoration of the broken relationship, with an emphasis on the role of Judah and Jerusalem in that restoration. Surely chap 11 is pivotal to Zech 9-14.

Returning to the prophetic narrative of 11:4-17, the role of the participants will be examined now. A very prominent role is taken by Yahweh himself. He directs Zechariah<sup>43</sup> to perform the symbolic actions. First the prophet is commanded to "tend the flock of slaughter." Later Yahweh tells him to cast the money paid as wages "to the potter."<sup>44</sup> The last command is for Zechariah to "take again . . . the equipment of a useless shepherd." It is clear that Yahweh is directing the entire course of events.

It is also Yahweh who introduces the term "flock of slaughter" and gives an elaborate description of it with reference to those who are using the flock for their own selfish purposes (v 5). Also it is his description of the wages as "that magnificent price at which I was valued by them" which demonstrates that the sum was ultimately an evaluation of Yahweh.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, there are two prophecies which Zechariah quotes as the direct words of Yahweh. One of these is vv 16-17 where Yahweh speaks first of a future shepherd who will not care for the flock and then curses him. It is interesting that though the prophet is commanded to represent this second shepherd, nothing is stated concerning how he actually carried it out.

<sup>42</sup>The fact that the section 13:7-9 speaks of the purification of Israel by fire argues against relocating it at the end of chap. 11 as is advocated by, for example, Rudolph (*Sacharja* 9-14, 213-15). Even the NEB rearranges the text, but the evidence is subjective.

<sup>43</sup>It is assumed that Zechariah is responsible for both chaps 1-8 and 9-14. See Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 66-70. Saebø argues for the possibility that the "I" of Zech 11:4-17 may in fact be the Zechariah of chaps 1-8, though only in the sense of an original "kernel" which has undergone later accretions (*Sacharja* 9-14, 252).

<sup>44</sup>Cf. n. 2 above.

<sup>45</sup>There is no external evidence for changing the word יָקָרְתִּי ("I was valued") to יָקָרְתָּ ("you [the shepherd] were valued") as advocated by the apparatus of BHS.

The other prophecy is in v 6, and it is so important that I will discuss it in some detail. Many have taken it to refer to the foreign nations, translating *יְשָׁרֵי הָאָרֶץ* as "inhabitants of the earth."<sup>46</sup> If so, the verse is completely extraneous to its context and there would seem to be some force to the argument by many that it is a later insertion.<sup>47</sup> Rather the term should be translated "inhabitants of the land" in reference to "the flock of slaughter" or perhaps even to the flock in addition to the "buyers," "sellers," and "shepherds" of v 5. The main objection to this interpretation is that the prophet's assignment seems to be negative from the outset, "Tend the flock of slaughter . . . for I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land." However, the verse is simply a prophetic declaration based on the results of the shepherd's ministry. It may be compared with Isa 6:9-13 where a positive intent is coupled with negative results. In light of what is going to happen Yahweh declares that there will be both internal ("I am going to deliver the people into each other's hand")<sup>48</sup> and external ("and into the hand of their king") strife. The "king" here probably means a foreign king.<sup>49</sup> The prediction then accords well with the symbolism of the two staffs. On this occasion, in contrast to all other instances of strife described in Zech 9-14, Yahweh declares, "and I will not deliver from their hand."

Turning to the role of the prophet, it is now evident that as the shepherd he is the personal representative of Yahweh. The rejection he experiences is the rejection of Yahweh. That is why the punishment is so severe, and that is why the rest of the book dwells so much on the need for cleansing. The vision of Zech 11 depicts a terrible sin committed against Yahweh himself. When the shepherd is said to have made "a covenant with all the peoples," it is really a covenant that Yahweh has made. Even the act of shepherding itself must represent the care of Yahweh for his people. For this reason it is correct to call the shepherd in 11:4-14 the "good" shepherd. This is further demonstrated by the contrast with the "useless" shepherd of vv 15-17. Rejection of the good leadership of Yahweh's personal representative led to the introduction of a bad shepherd.

A problem arises with the phrase "for the sheep merchants" in v 7. These merchants must be connected with the "buyers," "sellers," and "shepherds" of v 5 who are acting from evil motives. Therefore,

<sup>46</sup>Keil, *Minor Prophets*, 360.

<sup>47</sup>Rudolph, *Sacharja 9-14*, 205-6.

<sup>48</sup>The reading of *רֵעֵהוּ* as "his neighbor," in conformity with the pointing of MT, fits the context better than the repointing to "his shepherd" suggested in the apparatus of BHS.

<sup>49</sup>See Feinberg, *God Remembers*, 202-4.

in what sense does the representative of Yahweh act "for" (ל) these men? This very problem was probably the motive for the MT reading (though not necessarily in a conscious way). One proposal is to interpret the ל not as "for" but as an alternate grammatical device for the construct state when a noun governed by a construct is itself governing another noun.<sup>50</sup> GKC (§ 129d) gives an example from Ruth 2:3, חֶלֶקֶת הַשָּׂדֶה לְבוֹאֵז, which means "the portion of the field belonging to Boaz." In like manner, the expression in Zech 11:7 could be, "the flock of slaughter of the sheep merchants." That is, it is the sheep merchants who do the slaughtering. There are actually four nouns to be related in this view, and a construct chain of more than three nouns is extremely rare (see Lev 21:12; 25:29). The logical place to break the chain with a ל would be exactly where it is now.

An alternate explanation is given by M. Rehm. He gives the phrase a theological interpretation. God in his sovereignty permits oppressive rulers because of the sin of the people (1 Sam 8:18; Neh 9:37; Isa 3:4; 19:4; Hos 13:11). In mercy he is willing to send his shepherd to correct the abuses of existing rulers. However, God knows that the shepherd will be rejected. Therefore, the same situation will be true in the end as at the beginning. The oppressive rulers will enrich their own coffers at the expense of the flock. In that sense the shepherd works "for the sheep dealers."<sup>51</sup> Rehm's view seems less likely to me than the previous explanation.

The flock itself is repeatedly given the designation "of slaughter." It represents the great mass of the people of Israel who are being oppressed by their leaders. They are the ones who reject the shepherd initially. They are also the ones to whom the breaking of the first staff is directed. The "covenant with all the peoples" may be taken as the restraint imposed by God which prevents the nations from attacking and overrunning Israel.<sup>52</sup> Under foreign domination the leadership might be able to retain power by compromise with the enemy, but the common people suffer the severest consequences.

If the people rather than the merchants are involved in vv 12-13, there is an immediate problem. It would make more sense for the shepherd to ask for wages from the merchants rather than from the flock itself. Sheep do not pay wages to their shepherd. Furthermore, the flock has already shown its contempt for the shepherd ("and also they loathed me," v 8). Why would a new evaluation be called for?

The merchants are depicted throughout as ruthless and self-serving. They evidently symbolize the temporal rulers and upper

<sup>50</sup>Rudolph, *Sacharja* 9-14, 202; P. Lamarche, *Zacharie IX-XIV*, Structure Littéraire et Messianisme (Paris: Gabalda, 1961) 64.

<sup>51</sup>Rehm, "Hirtenallegorie," 189.

<sup>52</sup>See Feinberg, *God Remembers*, 207-8.

classes of the people. There could be foreign elements as well as native Israelites among them. Zechariah's characterization of them is no different than that of prophets who had preceded him (Isa 9: 19-20; Jer 23:1-2; Ezek 18:10-13; Hos 12:7 (Eng. v 8); Amos 2:6-7; Mic 3:1-3).

The merchants are given their own opportunity to evaluate the shepherd. They had been watching his actions and realized "that it was the word of Yahweh." It is unclear just why they came to this conclusion. Perhaps they saw some tangible evidence of the statement, "so it was broken in that day."<sup>53</sup> Or, there may be some connection with the statement in v 5, "Blessed be Yahweh, for I have become rich!" As Joyce Baldwin puts it,

What the prophet had done at the Lord's command was just what the merchants wanted to be done. They wanted to be rid of the shepherd. Once again God's providence seemed to be favoring them (cf. verse 5).<sup>54</sup>

At any rate, in the actual evaluation the merchants showed their contempt just as the people had previously. The thirty pieces of silver is a symbol of contempt. It should also be noted that the breaking of the second staff would directly affect the merchants. With the onset of anarchy there would be a complete overturning of all positions of privilege. Foreign conquerors might show favor toward leaders who would help enrich them, but internal chaos puts everyone in a dangerous position. It is fitting that the final element of the cleansing of the nation in chap 14 is referred to the merchants, "And there will no longer be a merchant [כְּנָעִי] in the house of Yahweh in that day."

#### CONCLUSION

The MT in Zech 11:7, 11 has strong external support. Nevertheless, various considerations strongly favor the alternate LXX reading of "merchant" in both places. The most important argument is the grammatical uniqueness of the structure of the passages if the consonants כְּנָ(ל) are read as conjunctions. For a single passage a grammatical anomaly might seem feasible. But when both passages have the same sequence of identical consonants but differing conjunctions, the coincidence is too unlikely. It is clear how the MT developed from the LXX, but the alternate development cannot be explained adequately. Finally, the LXX reading makes better sense within the context.

<sup>53</sup>See R. Brunner, *Sacharja* (Zürcher Bibelkommentare; Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1960) 150.

<sup>54</sup>*Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 184.





# THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE WARNING PASSAGES IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

STANLEY D. TOUSSAINT

*The prophetic portions of the warning passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews contain broad hints as to whom these admonitions are addressed. The notices of judgment and the warnings of failure do not deal with rewards for Christians but with eternal judgment and the missing of millennial blessing.*

\* \* \*

## INTRODUCTION

THE Book of Hebrews fairly bristles with a number of large and perplexing problems, such as authorship, destination, the nature of the work, and the writer's use of the OT. At or near the apex of questions concerned with the interpretation of this work is a consideration of the warning passages. Are they directed to believers, advising that there may be a loss of reward, or do they warn professing believers about the danger of apostasy? Even if the warnings are only hypothetical, the reader ultimately is driven back to these two alternatives. It is quite clear the book is addressed to a specific readership in a particular location with a definite situation in view (cf. 10:32-34; 12:4; 13:3, 23). Because the epistle is so specific it can hardly be said that one warning passage is directed to one group and another warning to a different group. It seems that the writer is addressing all the warnings to the same readership.

One great aid in determining the target of the warning passages is the eschatology in these passages. In other words, do the passages threaten loss of reward or the missing of salvation? If the former is correct, the paragraphs in question are addressed to believers; if on the other hand the eschatology deals with eternal damnation or eternal salvation, the passages are aimed at professing believers.

It is the thesis of this article that eschatology is a determinative factor in coming to the conclusion that the passages in question are

concerned with the danger of apostasy. There were some in the readership who had made a profession of faith in Christ but were seriously considering returning to Judaism. It was not a case of the Galatian heresy where some were attempting to unite Christianity with Judaism; on the contrary, these people were about to abandon Christianity to slip back to the works system of Judaism.

#### HEBREWS 2:1-4

A crucial point in this section is the meaning of "salvation" in v 3: "... how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Does it refer to believers' rewards or to ultimate salvation? For several reasons, the word must be understood eschatologically and soteriologically.

First, the same noun is used in 1:14, where the writer says angels are rendering service for the heirs of salvation. It is obvious that the noun σωτηρία is used in 1:14 in the ultimate sense.

The salvation here spoken of lies in the future; it is yet to be inherited, even if its blessings can already be enjoyed in anticipation. That is to say, it is that eschatological salvation which, in Paul's words, is now "nearer to us than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11) or, in Peter's words, is "ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5). Our author does not need to explain to his readers what he means by this salvation; the term and its meaning are familiar to them already. What they do need to understand is the fearful danger to which they will be exposed if they treat this salvation lightly.<sup>1</sup>

However, someone may object that the question is not the meaning of "salvation" in 1:14 but in 2:3. This criticism sounds valid, but it must be noted that the author of Hebrews often uses "hook words," i.e., vocabulary that is employed both at the end of one paragraph and at the beginning of the next to link units of thought together.<sup>2</sup> It appears that "salvation" is one of those hook words. (This is confirmed by the use of διὰ τοῦτο in 2:1.) The noun σωτηρία in 2:3 must then have the same meaning as it does in 1:14, that is, eschatological deliverance. Buchanan agrees with this concept:

"Salvation" in the Old Testament usually refers either to deliverance of a nation from the power of the enemy at war, or to receiving a pardon or verdict of "not guilty" in a court case. For the author of

<sup>1</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 25-26.

<sup>2</sup>Neil R. Lightfoot, *Jesus Christ Today: A Commentary on the Book of Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 48-49.

Hebrews it refers to the deliverance that the Son provides when God makes his "enemies a footstool for [his] feet" (1:13), and the Son utilize "the staff of justice" (1:8) to rule over his people.<sup>3</sup>

There is a second reason why the salvation must be eschatological; v 5 clearly defines it in such a manner. In that passage the writer refers to ". . . the world to come, concerning which we are speaking." The salvation certainly involves an eschatological age. In discussing the phrase τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, Westcott states:

The phrase is not to be understood simply of 'the future life' or, more generally, of 'heaven'. It describes, in relation to that which we may call its constitution, the state of things which, in relation to its development in time, is called 'the age to come' (ὁ μέλλων αἰών), and, in relation to its supreme Ruler and characteristics, 'the Kingdom of God,' or 'the Kingdom of heaven,' even the order which corresponds with the completed work of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Michel in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says, "Hb. 2:5 clearly represents the old apocalyptic phrase **אֶתְּ עוֹלָם**."<sup>5</sup>

There is a third factor that enters into the understanding of salvation in Heb 2:3. This is found in the clause of the same verse, "After it was at the first spoken through the Lord. . . ." The Greek text has ἥτις ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυριοῦ. "This singular mode of expression suggests somewhat more than the simple fact of *having first been spoken*, and implies that the teaching of the Lord was the true origin of the Gospel."<sup>6</sup> This can hardly be the doctrine of justification by faith. That truth had been in effect since man sinned (Heb 11:4; Gen 15:6; Ps 32:1; Hab 2:4). Nor can it refer to rewards, for this doctrine also is found in the OT (Dan 12:3). The salvation which received a beginning in the preaching of Christ was the kingdom and its nearness. Bruce comments:

It had, of course, been proclaimed in advance by the prophets; but not until the coming of Christ, when promise gave place to fulfillment, could it be effectively brought near. The note of fulfillment was heard when Jesus came into Galilee after John the Baptist's imprisonment, "preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:14f.), and when, as in the synagogue at Nazareth, He read the words

<sup>3</sup>George Wesley Buchanan, *To the Hebrews* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), 25.

<sup>4</sup>Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 42.

<sup>5</sup>TDNT, s.v. "ἡ οἰκουμένη," by Otto Michel, 5 (1967): 159.

<sup>6</sup>Westcott, *Hebrews*, 39.

of Isa. 61:1f. which announce "good tidings to the poor" and "release to the captives", and proclaim "the acceptable year of the Lord", and followed them with the declaration: "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:18ff).<sup>7</sup>

The kingdom was based on the death and resurrection of the Messiah, but it is not limited to that. The writer is looking beyond forensic imputation to the age to come so graphically proclaimed by the Lord Jesus. That is the salvation which is in view.

The fourth evidence in favor of seeing the salvation in this passage as being eschatological is the usage of σωτηρία in Hebrews. It is found seven times in the book (1:14; 2:3, 10; 5:9; 6:9; 9:28; 11:7). The occurrences in 1:14 and 2:3 quite clearly are prophetic in nature. The reference in 2:10 is in the context of bringing sons to glory, an obvious reference to the Christian's future life. In 5:9, the salvation is described as "eternal." The meaning in 6:9 is not so clear; it may, however, look at eternal salvation. The author expects the readers to bear fruit in their lives as those who are heirs of salvation. In 9:28, σωτηρία is the goal of Christ's second coming. In 11:7, it is used of Noah's deliverance in the flood and therefore does not relate to the subject at hand. Quite clearly then, the writer of Hebrews looks at salvation as being eschatological. The occurrence in 11:7 does not pertain to Christians. The only debatable uses are in 2:3 and 6:9, both of which probably refer to ultimate deliverance.

It should be noted that the salvation in view cannot refer to believer's rewards. The context has retribution in view in contrast to salvation. The argument is *a fortiori*. If disobedience to the angelic message brought just recompense, how much more will there be judgment on those who disregard the good news of a salvation that bears fruit in the coming age? At the judgment seat of Christ there will be no remembrance of sin (Heb 8:12; 10:17; Jer 31:34; Ps 103:12). The paragraph is looking at eschatological salvation and therefore is a warning to the professing readers of Hebrews not to jettison Christianity in favor of Judaism.

#### HEBREWS 3:7-4:13

The warning here is for readers to fear coming short of the promised rest. The *crux interpretum* is the meaning of "rest." The vocabulary used is κατάπαυσις (3:11, 18; 4:1, 3 [twice], 5, 10, 11), καταπαύω (4:4, 8, 10) and σαββατισμός (4:9). The noun κατάπαυσις was employed in classical Greek to mean "a putting to rest, causing to cease," but in the LXX and NT it lost its causal sense and simply

<sup>7</sup>Bruce, *Hebrews*, 29.

meant "rest, repose."<sup>8</sup> The verb καταπαύω has a transitive meaning in Heb 4:8, where the writer refers to Joshua's failure to give Israel rest. In Heb 4:4 it takes an intransitive sense, where God is said to have rested from his creative work. The noun σαββατισμός is an NT *hapax legomenon* and means "Sabbath rest, Sabbath observance."<sup>9</sup>

As one studies the passage he comes to the conclusion the writer of Hebrews is looking at several facets of rest. First, there is the seventh-day rest of God when he ceased from his creative work (4:4, 10). There is a second aspect of rest, the rest which involved Israel's taking the promised land (3:11, 18-19). That the conquest of the land was viewed as a form of rest is seen in such passages as Deut 3:20; 12:9; 25:19; Josh 11:23; 21:44; 22:4, and 23:1. The third facet of rest in Hebrews 3 and 4 is the promised rest. Here is the difficulty. What is being promised?

There are a number who take the promised rest to be eternal bliss,<sup>10</sup> and several factors support this position. First, the *promise* of entering the rest (4:1) implies that the blessing is a future one (cf. 4:11). Second, the heavenly estate described in Rev 14:13 refers to rest.

Others say that the rest in view is the present Christian experience of peace.<sup>11</sup> Some who hold this position say that the existing rest for the Christian finds its ultimate completion in eternity. Several lines of evidence are used to support this interpretation. For one, the verb εἰσερχόμεθα in 4:3 is present tense, which implies that this is to be the present experience of believers who walk with God. However, this may well be a futuristic present such as one finds in Matt 17:11; John 14:3; and 1 Cor 16:5. Turner affirms that such occurrences are "... confident assertions intended to arrest attention with a vivid and realistic tone or else with imminent fulfilment in mind. . . ." <sup>12</sup> Quite

<sup>8</sup>G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), 237.

<sup>9</sup>William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), 746.

<sup>10</sup>Representative of this group are Bruce, *Hebrews*, 77-79; Thomas Hewitt, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 89; Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 161-62; Homer A. Kent, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972), 86-87; Lightfoot, *Hebrews*, 96-97; Westcott, *Hebrews*, 98-99.

<sup>11</sup>Representative are W. H. Griffith Thomas, *Let Us Go On* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 45-50; Clarence S. Roddy, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 46-48; Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible New American Standard Translation* (Chicago: Moody, 1976), 1841; R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Faith-Rest Life* (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., 1961), 22-49.

<sup>12</sup>Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, James Hope Moulton, ed., *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 63.

obviously, this kind of use in Heb 4:3 would catch the reader's attention.

There is a second line of support for taking this to be the peace of God in one's heart as he walks with God. It may be that the invitation of Christ Jesus in Matt 11:28-30 parallels this passage. Of course, the Lord's solicitation in Matthew 11 is a call to rest, but does that prove that this is the meaning in Hebrews? The idea of peace in the Christian's walk is completely biblical, but this by no means confirms that concept here.

The third support for taking this to be the Christian's present experience is typology. Thus, the Exodus is said to portray redemption, the wilderness wanderings illustrate the pre-rest walk of the believer, and being in the land looks to the faith-rest walk. This line of evidence has its own seeds of destruction in it. The writer of Hebrews specifically notes that neither Joshua nor David, who were in the land, gave the people rest (Heb 4:7-8)! Not only does every support for this view lose its force when fully considered; there are formidable objections to it. For one, the words of Heb 4:12-13 oppose such an interpretation. These verses are not words of assurance but *warning*. That they explain the preceding verse is obvious from the γάρ with which v 12 is introduced. It is an admonition which predicts judgment for those who do not enter rest. A second objection rests on the instruction of 4:10. There the writer says that the readers are to cease from works as God did. The clear implication of the faith-rest view is that God's works were bad! In other words, the viewpoint which takes this passage as referring to the Christian's intimate walk with God and the peace which results from it enjoins the Christian to cease from his law-works, his striving, his fleshly labors, and simply to trust in God. If the parallel is carried out in 4:10, then God's works were also carnal and fleshly strivings.

A third interpretation takes this rest of 3:7-4:13 to anticipate the coming millennial kingdom age.<sup>13</sup> A number of factors point to this as the best interpretation.

First, in Heb 4:1, the *promise* to enter God's rest remains for those who receive it. The *promise* implies that it is futuristic in application.

Second, Psalm 95, the basis for the entire warning section and the source of the admonition concerning rest, is an enthronement Psalm.<sup>14</sup> Regarding this type of psalm Kaiser says, "Therefore, each

<sup>13</sup>Representatives of this viewpoint are Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 64-74; G. H. Lang, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Paternoster, 1951), 75-80; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest," *BSac* 130 (1973), 138-50.

<sup>14</sup>Christoph Barth, *Introduction to the Psalms* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 21.



of these psalms alike tells the story of a divine kingdom which is yet to be set up on the earth."<sup>15</sup> In other words, the theme of the enthronement psalms is clearly eschatological and anticipates the rule of the Lord on this planet (cf. Ps 93:1-2; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1). The "rest" of Psalm 95 must therefore anticipate the millennium.

Third, the concept of σαββατισμός (Heb 4:9) was used in Jewish literature to refer to the kingdom age. This has been noted by many.<sup>16</sup> In the Jewish prayer after sabbath meals the petition is made, "May the All-merciful let us inherit the day which shall be wholly a Sabbath and rest in the life everlasting."<sup>17</sup> Buchanan asserts that the Epistle to the Hebrews is so steeped in the OT that the concept of rest cannot be limited to a spiritual interpretation but must include national and earthly concepts; in fact, he feels that any other interpretation is inconsistent.<sup>18</sup>

Andreasen's view is an illustration of this.<sup>19</sup> While he acknowledges the OT expectation of a Jewish earthly kingdom in the term "rest," he goes on to give the word a limited spiritual meaning in Hebrews. Westcott does the same. He says, "The Jewish teachers dwelt much upon the symbolical meaning of the Sabbath as prefiguring 'the world to come'."<sup>20</sup> But having said this he goes on to take this to be eternity. It certainly is more logical to say that the NT theology of rest is founded on OT doctrine.

A fourth factor supports the idea of a millennial rest as being in the mind of the writer of Hebrews. The OT refers to the kingdom age as being a time of rest (Ps 132:12-14; Isa 11:10; 14:3; 32:18; 34:15).

Fifth, the "rest" spoken of in Psalm 95 clearly involved Israel's dwelling in the land; therefore, the promised rest can scarcely be divorced from settlement in the land.

Sixth, Heb 4:8 speaks of another prophetic "day." This clearly is a *period of time* and is explained in 4:9 as the sabbath rest.

Seventh, the rest was prepared from the foundation of the world (Heb 4:3-4) just as the kingdom was (Matt 25:34). This explains why Christ was employed in healing on the Jewish sabbath in John 5. The ultimate sabbath had not yet come so Christ with his Father was working to bring in that ultimate sabbath or kingdom age. It should

<sup>15</sup>Kaiser, "Promise Theme," 142.

<sup>16</sup>Westcott, *Hebrews*, 98-99; cf. Bruce, *Hebrews*, 75; Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 73; Hughes, *Hebrews*, 161.

<sup>17</sup>*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, s.v. "Sabbath (Jewish)" by I. Abrahams 10(1930): 891.

<sup>18</sup>Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 64-65, 72-74.

<sup>19</sup>Neils-Erik Andreasen, *Rest and Redemption* (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University, 1978), 109-15.

<sup>20</sup>Westcott, *Hebrews*, 98.

be noted that this idea of a sabbath day being the millennial age is no recent, innovative interpretation. It dates back at least to the Epistle of Barnabas in the early second century.

By way of conclusion to this section it may be said that there are three "rests" in these paragraphs of Hebrews. First, there is God's cessation from His creation work. This rest will be manifested in the kingdom age when redeemed mankind enters His inheritance. The second rest was Israel's conquest and possession of the promised land under Joshua. This is a picture of the kingdom rest. The third rest is the promised rest which actually is God's rest which comes to man in the millennium.

Here then is the warning. If the readers were mere professors and rejected Christ in order to go back to the works system of Judaism, they would be excluded from the promised kingdom age or God's rest.

#### HEBREWS 6:4-8

This warning, infamous for its difficulty, has little to say eschatologically. The only prophetic statement is made by illustration and implication in vv 7-8. There the writer warns, "For ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned."<sup>21</sup>

Obviously, some kind of judgment is in view here. But is it a judgment to determine believers' rewards or is it the condemnation of the lost? Those who claim the former position point to the consumption of the Christian's works by flame in 1 Corinthians 3 as being parallel with v 8 here. Is this, however, the best interpretation?

There is no solid evidence that the picture portrays the damnation of the lost. No comfort can be derived from the clause "*close to being cursed*" in v 7. The same vocabulary is employed in 8:13 for a certain and imminent doom. In other words, the worthless ground was destined to be cursed soil, scarcely the kind of vocabulary to be used of a Christian, even if he was carnal! Furthermore, the contrast between the two verses seems to portray the condition of the earth before the fall and after. In its Edenic state it was blessed and productive; after the sin of Adam it was cursed and in need of redemption.<sup>22</sup> Bruce compares the analogy to the vineyard song of Isaiah 5.<sup>23</sup> In either case the figure graphically portrays Israel. It had

<sup>21</sup>NASB. All extended quotations are from the NASB.

<sup>22</sup>Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 110.

<sup>23</sup>Bruce, *Hebrews*, 124-25.

received the blessings of promises, covenants, the law, the Scriptures, and the name of Jehovah. If, however, the people failed to respond to the Messiah, the only destiny was eternal perdition. Kent comments, "The whole tenor of the passage demands retribution and destruction as the emphatic point."<sup>24</sup> Also, as Hewitt notes, "The context does not favour the suggestion that the piece of ground should be burnt by man to improve it. . . ."<sup>25</sup> The threefold progression in v 8 of worthless, cursed, and burned hardly looks at the life of a believer in Christ. Finally, the contrast with v 9 implies that a distinction is being drawn between the future of the lost and saved. As was noted before, σωτηρία in Hebrews when used of Christians anticipates eschatological salvation.<sup>26</sup> This is the destiny of the redeemed; v 8 looks to the future of the damned.

#### HEBREWS 10:26-39

This fourth warning section has a great deal to do with future judgment and some with the promise of future blessing. In this paragraph the writer declares:

For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.

Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."

It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.

For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.

<sup>24</sup>Kent, *Hebrews*, 115.

<sup>25</sup>Hewitt, *Hebrews*, 109.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. p. 68.

Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.

But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

This paragraph is the most severe of the five warning sections. Perhaps this is due to the degree of sin and the descriptions of the rebellion committed by those who fall into the peril of the warning. They are guilty of willful sin, outright defiance of God (v 26; cf. Num 15:30-36). The disannulling of the law of Moses described in v 28 looks back to Deut 17:2-6. The context of that OT passage deals with Israelites who abandoned the worship of Jehovah to go into idolatry or the veneration of other gods. In v 29 the writer of Hebrews describes the sins of those who apostatize as trampling under foot (καταπατέω) the Son of God, of regarding (ἡγέομαι, a sin of the intellect) as unclean the blood of the covenant, and of insulting the Spirit of grace. In this last sin the verb is ἐνυβρίζω, a compounded verb which describes the awesome violence of God's holy name by insolence.<sup>27</sup> It here parallels the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Matt 12:32; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10).

Sprinkled throughout these descriptions of sin and rebellion are allusions to eschatology, particularly the coming of judgment and the promise of blessing.

In several verses there is the prediction of judgment. The first allusion to this judgment is found in the connective γάρ in v 26. Quite clearly this particle introduces an explanation of the significance of the approaching day referred to in the preceding verse. That day, while it will be a time of vindication and deliverance for God's people, will bring condemnation for the lost as is seen in this passage. Westcott succinctly asserts, "The mention of 'the day' in v. 25 calls out the sad severity of the warning which follows."<sup>28</sup>

The judgment is described more fully in Heb 10:27, the verse which follows. The description is very interesting and significant. To explain what the judgment involves the writer of Hebrews quotes

<sup>27</sup>The only occurrence of ἐνυβρίζω in the LXX is in Lev 24:11 where it describes blasphemy.

<sup>28</sup>Westcott, *Hebrews*, 327.

from Isa 26:11, a passage which contrasts the righteous with the wicked. Specifically, the lost are referred to as "enemies." The Greek term *ὑπεναντίος* describes what is "opposed to, opposite or contrary to."<sup>29</sup> This assize can hardly be a reference to believers' rewards! The awesomeness of this judgment is emphasized by the vocabulary. "The terror of the expectation is brought out by a more literal rendering of the words, 'a certain fearful expectation of judgment' (ASV); the indefinite 'a certain' leaves it somewhat open to the reader's imagination to fill in the gruesome details of that judgment."<sup>30</sup> Certainly, as Wescott puts it, "Such a judgment (c.ix.27) would be, for those whom the Apostle describes, condemnation."<sup>31</sup>

This future judgment of the lost is further described in v 29 where the writer uses an *a fortiori* argument. The punishment inflicted for highhanded or willful disobedience was death (Deut 17:2-6). If this was true in the OT for defiance of the law, how much worse will be God's judgment for scorning the Son of God (cf. 2:2)? What would be worse than physical death but eternal perdition? "The judgment awaiting those who will not trust for their salvation in the sacrifice of Christ must consist of eternal loss in hell. It is pictured as a fire that is almost personified and is possessed of zeal which is about to consume the opponents of Christ."<sup>32</sup>

The quotations in v 30 taken from the Song of Moses in Deut 32:35-36 first sets forth the principle that God avenges his enemies. This first quotation is not taken directly from the Hebrew or LXX and may be a well-known proverb adapted from Deut 32:35.<sup>33</sup> While the objects of the warning in Deut 32:35 are Israelites, *unbelieving* Jews are in view. As Hughes asserts, "This God whom they have confessed as the God of grace and mercy is also the God of holiness and justice: faithfulness to his covenant leads to blessing, but rebellion means retribution."<sup>34</sup> The second quotation from Deut 32:36 predicts God's vindication of his people, Israel, in a still future day. The two passages together describe the deliverance of believing Israel and the judgment of those who do not trust in Messiah. Bruce comments, "This certainly means that He will execute judgment on their behalf, vindicating their cause against their enemies, but also that, on the same principles of impartial righteousness, He will execute judgment against them when they forsake His covenant."<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup>The only other NT occurrence is in Col 2:14.

<sup>30</sup>Lightfoot, *Hebrews*, 194.

<sup>31</sup>Westcott, 329.

<sup>32</sup>Kent, *Hebrews*, 205.

<sup>33</sup>The same saying is found in Rom 12:19.

<sup>34</sup>Hughes, *Hebrews*, 425.

<sup>35</sup>Bruce, *Hebrews*, 262-63.

Further reference to judgment is found in v 31 of Hebrews 10. While the verse parallels David's statement, "Let us now fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great" (2 Sam 24:14), the context is pointedly judgmental. For a believer it is a merciful thing to fall into the hands of a loving God, but for apostates it is punitive and terrifying.

Not until Heb 10:37-38 is the next reference to judgment given. It is a quotation from Hab 2:3-4. In an article of this length it is quite impossible to discuss the problems of quotation in this passage. It may be summarized by saying that the writer of Hebrews introduces the Habakkuk quotation by using Isa 26:20, "For yet in a very little while." The passage from Habakkuk is a free citation of the LXX text. In the use of the quotation, the NT writer refers to the one who draws back. The nature of this failure is not spelled out; however, it is quite clear that it refers to an apostate. In such a one God takes no pleasure.

V 39 portrays the destiny of the one who "shrinks back." For him the end is ἀπώλειαν. Concerning this noun Kent simply states that it

. . . means destruction or ruin, and is commonly used in the New Testament of eternal destruction. Such passages as Matthew 7:13; Romans 9:22; Philippians 1:28; 3:19; and 1 Timothy 6:9 reveal this aspect of the word. Both Judas and the Antichrist are called 'the son of perdition' (John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:3), because of the eternal torment and ruin which their heinous deeds will bring. The usage of *apoleia* here makes it clear that the judgment described in this context is not just a chastening of God's people but the final destruction of apostates.<sup>36</sup>

This fourth warning section not only contains eschatology anticipating judgment; it also looks ahead to promise. The first reference to this blessing is found in 10:34 where there is mention of a better and abiding possession. As the Lord had promised in Matt 6:20, they had laid up treasure in heaven. Peter also describes the imperishable quality of the Christian's inheritance (1 Pet 1:4). The Hebrew believer's eschatology in this time of persecution would be a real source of encouragement to him.

V 35 refers to the reward that comes from confidence. This is not the same as the rewards given in 1 Corinthians 3 and 2 Corinthians 5. Very interestingly, μισθαποδοσία occurs only in Hebrews (2:2; 10:35; 11:26). In 2:2 it is used of punishment and in the other two references it has the positive idea of blessing. This noun, derived from μισθός and ἀποδίδωμι, looks at a payment of wages. Quite clearly, this is the glory

<sup>36</sup>Kent, *Hebrews*, 215.



which awaits God's child (Rom 8:18). Hughes explains, "The relationship of the present pilgrimage to the future reward is the relationship of faith to hope, as the quotation which follows teaches (vv 37 and 38) and the next chapter so amply illustrates."<sup>37</sup>

What the reward involves is stated more clearly in 10:36. It consists of receiving "what was promised." The Greek literally says "the promise." The verb used in this verse, *κομίζω*, is used with the promise in 11:13 and 39. This can hardly be accidental. In both of the occurrences in chap. 11 this vocabulary anticipates the millennium. The promise then looks ahead to life in Christ's earthly kingdom.

V 39 explains this as "the preserving of the soul." Bruce interprets the phrase *εἰς περιποίησιν ψυχῆς* to be "... a variant expression for *ζήσεται* in the Habakkuk quotation in v. 38."<sup>38</sup> "To possess and preserve one's soul is the essence of salvation."<sup>39</sup>

In summary of the eschatology of the fourth warning it may be said that the promise of life is made and the warning of eternal perdition is issued for apostates.

#### HEBREWS 12:25-29

This fifth warning section is based on Hag 2:6, a passage which is predictive and eschatological. The argument here is another *a fortiori* one. The writer is looking back to Mount Sinai where God spoke to Israel through Moses. The voice came from Mount Sinai, so it was "on earth" as v 25 states. Today Christ who is in heaven warns through his earthly messengers. If the voice *on earth* brought inescapable judgment, *how much more* the voice from *heaven* (cf. 2:2-3). From what those who were disobedient did not escape is left unstated. It could be the judgment of death for flagrant disregard of the law or it may be the failure to enter the promised land. Probably it is the latter alternative since that entire generation failed in this regard.

To make the point even more forceful and vivid Hag 2:6 is quoted, "Yet once more I will shake not only earth, but also the heaven." That passage looks back to the shaking of Sinai.<sup>40</sup> The primary problem here is how literal one is to take the future shaking of earth and heaven. Kent has a good word on this:

Although some interpret the prophecy metaphorically as referring to the upheavals accomplished by Christ's first coming in its effect

<sup>37</sup>Hughes, *Hebrews*, 432.

<sup>38</sup>Bruce, *Hebrews*, 275.

<sup>39</sup>Kent, *Hebrews*, 215.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. Exod 19:18; Judg 5:4-5; Ps 68:8; 77:18.

upon Jewish worship and politics, the parallelism with the former shaking makes this view unlikely. The first shaking was physical and geographical at Sinai. There is no good reason to take this second shaking of the earth and the heavens above it in any less literal sense.<sup>41</sup>

The writer goes on to say that the only things which will remain after this are those things which cannot be shaken. This is not looking at the judgment seat of Christ where the believer's works and motives are to be tried by fire. The contrast is between the saved and lost.

This fits with the conclusion in v 28. It is a *kingdom* which the Christian will receive, not simply rewards in the kingdom.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, the concept of God as a consuming fire fits the idea of the judgment of condemnation. Hewitt affirms, "At the second advent of Jesus Christ, just as the material and transitory will disappear and the eternal and permanent will remain, so what is false and vile will be revealed in the fire of God's holiness and those whose characters are such will be consumed by the fire of His judgment."<sup>43</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

In all five warning passages of Hebrews the thing to be avoided by the original readers of that discourse was not loss of believers' rewards but loss of salvation. Quite clearly the writer knew of a group in that early congregation who had made professions of faith in Jesus Christ but were in peril of jettisoning their confessions to apostatize and lapse back into Judaism. The prophetic elements in the warnings confirm this interpretation.

<sup>41</sup>Kent, *Hebrews*, 275.

<sup>42</sup>The present participle παραλαμβάνοντες is both present and futuristic. The kingdom is received in the present time by faith; its realization is future. Cf. 11:39-40.

<sup>43</sup>Hewitt, *Hebrews*, 204.

# SECOND CLASS CONDITIONS IN NEW TESTAMENT GREEK

JAMES L. BOYER

*Less frequent than other types of conditional sentences, second class conditions are also more specialized in their meaning and more restricted in their grammatical format. In these alone the verb tenses used provide the formal key to their identification. The major exegetical question, and the only serious divergence on the part of grammarians, centers around these tenses. This study concludes that the tenses used were determined by normal aspectual considerations, not by arbitrary rule of grammar.*

\* \* \*

SECOND class conditional sentences occur less frequently than other types in the NT; there are only 47 examples.<sup>1</sup> Called by some "Contrary to Fact" or "Unreal,"<sup>2</sup> by others "Determined as Unfulfilled,"<sup>3</sup> they enjoy more agreement on the part of the grammarians than the other types and are less problem for the exegete.

<sup>1</sup>As compared with more than 300 first class and about 250 third class. There are no complete fourth class conditions in the NT. A listing of these 47 examples may be had by combining the lists given in notes 16-19, plus the two exceptions listed in the text below.

<sup>2</sup>So commonly in the grammars of classical Greek: W. W. Goodwin, *Greek Grammar*, rev. by C. B. Gulick (Boston: Ginn, 1930) 296, Hadley and Allen, *Greek Grammar* (New York: D. Appleton, 1890) 283, Adolph Kaegi, *A Short Grammar of Classical Greek* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1914) 143, and H. W. Smyth, *A Greek Grammar* (New York: American Book Co., 1916) 342. Among NT Greek grammars also: F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. by Robert Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961) 182, H. Dana and J. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan) 287, W. S. LaSor, *Handbook of New Testament Greek* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973) B223, H. P. V. Nunn, *A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1951) 117, and Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, Vol. 3 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963) 91.

<sup>3</sup>J. H. Moulton, *An Introduction to the Study of New Testament Greek* (New York: Macmillan, 1955) 211, S. G. Green, *A Handbook of the Grammar of the Greek Testament* (New York: Revell, n.d.) 283, A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 1012, W. D. Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1941) 195.

## IDENTIFICATION OF THE TYPE

Second class conditions are more formally structured than either of the other types. Both first and third class show a characteristic structure only in the protasis, but the second class shows a distinctive pattern in both the protasis and apodosis; indeed, it is the apodosis which clearly identifies it.

The protasis uses the conditional conjunction εἰ with the verb in the indicative mood. In this it is like the first class. But the second class uses only *past* tenses,<sup>4</sup> whereas the first class may use *any* tense. Thus, theoretically, there can be ambiguity in the form of the protasis, but in few cases does this cause confusion of identification.<sup>5</sup>

The apodosis of second class conditions also uses a past tense of the indicative, usually<sup>6</sup> with ἄν. In almost<sup>7</sup> every instance, the apodosis is a simple statement of a non-fact; what would be or would have been but was not. This contrasts strongly with the great variety of apodosis forms occurring in the first and third classes.

The negative in the protasis is almost always μή, with only two instances of οὐκ.<sup>8</sup> This gives many examples of εἰ μή coming together where μή is simply the negation of the clause. There are a few instances where it seems to be εἰ μή = "except" or "unless."<sup>9</sup> The negative of the apodosis is always οὐκ.<sup>10</sup> Both μή in the protasis and οὐκ in the apodosis are what we would expect. In the protasis, which states a potential circumstance, that which *might* have been, μή is used. Οὐκ is

<sup>4</sup>These are the secondary or augmented tenses of the indicative: the imperfect, aorist, and pluperfect.

<sup>5</sup>In about one-sixth of the first class conditions a past tense indicative verb is used in the protasis, but the identification is unambiguous because the apodosis is not compatible with the second class form. In a few instances (Acts 11:17, Rom 5:15, Eph 4:21, Rev 20:15) the *form* of both the protasis and the apodosis *could* be second class, but the sense is clearly not contrary to fact. Of course, this is not unnatural; a simple condition (first class) can be used of the past as naturally as of the present and future time.

<sup>6</sup>Ἄν occurs in 36 examples; it is omitted in 11 instances. This tendency to omit ἄν is characteristic of *koine* Greek.

<sup>7</sup>In one instance (Luke 19:42) the apodosis is not stated. In two instances (1 Cor 12:17, 19) the apodosis is a rhetorical question implying the simple statement, "There would be none."

<sup>8</sup>Μή occurs 11 times. The two occurrences of οὐκ (Matt 26:24, Mark 14:21) are actually parallel passages duplicating a single occurrence.

<sup>9</sup>This phenomenon of εἰ μή = "except" or "unless" will be dealt with separately at another time.

<sup>10</sup>There is a negative apodosis in 23 of the 47 examples. Οὐκ is used in 22 of them, οὐδ' (οὐ δέ = "not even") in one (Heb 8:4).

natural in the apodosis, which expresses nothing doubtful or subjective, but states matter-of-factly what actually would have been if the condition had been true.

#### RELATION TO REALITY: CONTRARY TO FACT

There seems to be no debate on the essential meaning of the second class conditional sentence. It states a condition which as a matter of fact has not been met and follows with a statement of what would have been true if it had. An extended paraphrase in English would be, "If this were the case, which it is not, then this would have been true, which as a matter of fact, is not." The term "contrary to fact" therefore is an accurate descriptive name for this type.<sup>11</sup>

It must be kept in mind in the use of this descriptive term that "contrary to fact" has to do with the *statement* of the fact, not the actual fact itself. The speaker *states* it as being contrary to fact; he may or may not be correct in that statement. Of the 47 NT examples, 39 are by Christ or by inspired writers of scripture; in every case, the statement is also contrary to fact in actuality. In each of the other 8 examples, where the speakers were men liable to error, they spoke what they *believed* to be contrary to fact; in two instances they were wrong.<sup>12</sup>

A very significant comparison must be made here. In dealing with the significance of the first class condition, this distinction between fact and statement of fact sometimes has been used to explain those many examples where the first class is used in obviously false or uncertain statements.<sup>13</sup> However, there is a drastic difference in this respect between first and second class. In the first class examples where there is a discrepancy between the actual fact and the statement of it, it is *not* a matter of error or ignorance; it is almost always a deliberate statement of what is known or considered by the speaker to be false. But in the second class, there is not a single instance of stating something as contrary to fact which is not so in the judgment of the speaker. He is making what he considers a contrary-to-fact statement. There is no

<sup>11</sup>A. T. Robertson's designation "Determined as Un-Fulfilled" seems also to be a valid characterization. The problem with his system of classifying conditional sentences lies in his designating the first class "Determined as Fulfilled," which understandably has been misinterpreted as the opposite of the second class, therefore "True to Fact." See my preceding article: "First Class Conditions: What Do They Mean?", *GTJ* 2 (1981) 79-80.

<sup>12</sup>Luke 7:39, John 18:30.

<sup>13</sup>See the discussion in my preceding article, "First Class Conditions," 77-78.

such thing as "assuming for the sake of argument" that a statement is contrary to fact. To put it in another way, the first class condition is *not* the opposite of the second class. It is *not* "true to fact" in the sense that the second is contrary to fact.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF TENSES

In dealing with the significance of the tenses used, two factors require consideration: first, the fact that only past tenses of the indicative are used, and second, the question of the time relation involved.

##### *Only Past Tenses*

Contrary-to-fact conditional sentences are the only type which has tense limitation. Why? And why *these* tenses? The answer will help to explain and support the meaning assigned to this type of construction.

All conditional sentences by their very nature involve statements which may or may not be true. That is what "if" means. The uncertainty involved may be due to ignorance, supposition, choice, course of events (I call it providence), or simple futurity. If the *time* involved is either present or future, there is always this element of uncertainty from the viewpoint of the human speaker (both Greek and English are human languages). Only in past time has the uncertainty become certainty by actual occurrence, and even then it is not certain to the speaker until and unless he *knows* about it. The second class condition is one which expresses the "would be" results of a *past* condition *known* (or thought) to be unfulfilled or contrary to fact. Very naturally, then, it uses only past tenses.

It is instructive to note that this usage is but one example of what grammarians have called the "potential" or "unreal" indicative. This idiom includes, beside the unreal conditional sentence, such other uses of the augmented tenses of the indicative, with or without ἄν, as in courteous or polite language (Acts 25:22, Gal 4:20), in expressions of necessity, obligation, possibility, and propriety (Luke 24:26, Acts 24:19, 1 Cor 5:10), and in cautious statements and impossible wishes (Rom 9:3). Even in English we use "ought," "would," "could"—past tense forms which are used in many of these unreal statements.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup>For a discussion of the idiom, consult the grammars: (classical) Goodwin and Gulick, *Greek Grammar*, 283, 297, Kaegi, *Short Grammar*, 136, 137, Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 296; (NT) Dana and Mantey, *Manual Grammar*, 169, A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 918-23, Turner, *Syntax*, 90-93.



### Time Reference

Some grammarians have distinguished two time references in second class conditions, indicated by the tense used in the protasis.<sup>15</sup> It is claimed that the imperfect tense is used for a statement which is *presently* contrary to fact, the aorist and pluperfect for a *past* contrary-to-fact condition. Is this a valid distinction in NT Greek?

It should be noted that this, like *all* considerations dealing with Greek tense, is more a matter of *aspect* or *aktionsart* than of *time*. By the very nature of the case *all* contrary-to-fact conditions are to some extent past in time. The decision that it is not fulfilled has already been made *before* the sentence is uttered or written. "If you believed Moses you would believe me" (John 5:46) is speaking of a *present* situation which is not true; they are not at that moment believing. The imperfect tense used is a durative tense. They are in a state of unbelieving which is presently continuing but of course it has already been in existence long enough to be known as untrue. If the aorist had been used in this protasis the sense might have been, "If you had (sometime in the past) exercised faith, you would have (now) believed me."

Most NT examples fit well into this distinction. All of those using the aorist<sup>16</sup> and the pluperfect<sup>17</sup> are past in time reference, properly expressed in English with a past perfect: "If it had been . . . it would have been. . . ." The case is not quite so clear-cut with the imperfect, but even here two-thirds of the examples fit the pattern,<sup>18</sup> indicating a present time reference, "if it were . . . , it would be. . . ." Of the nine apparent exceptions, seven<sup>19</sup> are instances of the imperfect of the verb εἰμί. Since this verb has only one past tense (apparently

<sup>15</sup>Dana and Mantey [289] make the strange assertion that "a contrary to fact condition dealing with *present time* has the imperfect tense in both protasis and apodosis . . . a contrary to fact condition dealing with *past time* has the aorist or pluperfect tense in both protasis and apodosis," even though two of the examples they cite show a mixed use, with different tenses in the two clauses. In view of the fact that 16 of the NT examples actually show such mixed tenses (9 examples have the imperfect in the protasis with aorist or pluperfect in the apodosis; 7 have the reverse situation; all but one seem to be *past* in time reference) this statement obviously is an overstatement. If there is any relation between tense and time reference, it is the tense of the *protasis* which must be the determining one.

<sup>16</sup>There are 16 examples: Matt 11:21, 11:23, 12:7, 24:22, 26:24, Mark 13:20, 14:21, Luke 10:13, 19:42, John 4:10, 15:20, 15:24, Rom 9:29, 1 Cor 2:8, Gal 3:21, Heb 4:8.

<sup>17</sup>There are 4 examples: Matt 24:43, Luke 12:39, John 8:19, Acts 26:32. John 19:11 is questionable. Cf. my treatment of this verse below.

<sup>18</sup>15 out of 24 examples: Luke 7:39, John 5:46, 8:42, 9:33, 9:41, 15:19, 18:36, 19:11 (?), Acts 18:14, 1 Cor 11:31, 12:17, 12:19, Gal. 1:10, Heb 8:4, 8:7.

<sup>19</sup>Matt 23:30, John 11:21, 11:32, 18:30, Gal. 4:15, 1 John 2:19. Also, in John 14:2 the verb is unexpressed but most naturally it would be ἦν, the imperfect of εἰμί.

the intrinsically durative aspect of this verb rendered unnecessary the development of an aorist and pluperfect conjugation) it is conceivable that grammatical constructions which normally called for those tenses may have been met by substituting the imperfect. However, aside from this rationalization, the basic aspect of the imperfect tense fits perfectly in each of the seven cases. While the sense demands that the time reference is past, the kind of action is *durative* in that past time.

The remaining two apparent exceptions to the general rule under consideration may be explained in a similar way. In John 14:28, "if you loved me, you would have rejoiced," it seems clear that the time reference is past. Earlier in the verse Christ reminded them of his impending departure and return and follows that statement with this condition. He was clearly thinking of love as a durative state of being, "if you were (at that time) loving me," rather than a specific act of love. His use of the imperfect emphasizes this.

In Rom 7:7 the case is not quite so clear. First, it may be seen as a *present* contrary-to-fact condition: "I would not (now) know lust if the law were not continually saying. . . ." This would probably be easiest grammatically. Even the verb in the apodosis is in sense an imperfect, since the verb οἶδα is a perfect form with a present meaning and its pluperfect form is the corresponding imperfect. But the sense resulting is impossible. Or, second, it may be seen as a *past* contrary-to-fact condition: "I would not have known lust if the law had not said. . . ." If this is the sense, then the imperfect verb would be calling attention to the durative aspect: "If the law were not continually telling me. . . ." emphasizing the persistent influence of Paul's exposure to law-teaching.

In summary, it seems generally to be true that an imperfect verb in the protasis of a second class condition indicates a present-time condition and an aorist or pluperfect verb indicates a past-time condition. The few apparent exceptions are examples where the durative nature of the past-time condition is emphasized by the use of the imperfect. But the existence of a considerable number of exceptions points rather to the conclusion that this "rule" works because of the durative sense of the imperfect rather than because it was a required structural pattern. It is better to approach the meaning by giving attention to the aspect of the tenses used rather than to an imagined rule.

### *Other Noteworthy Examples*

Individual consideration needs to be given to a few examples which show some unusual characteristics.

*Luke 17:6.* "If you have faith . . . you would be saying . . ." The protasis has εἰ with a present indicative verb and is therefore a first

class condition. But the apodosis has ἄν with an imperfect verb, which fits the second class pattern. Thus it is cited as an example of what grammarians sometimes call a "mixed condition."<sup>20</sup> There is nothing inherently unlikely about such a situation, and Nigel Turner well explains its peculiar appropriateness in this instance<sup>21</sup> as expressing a subtle politeness which avoided the harshness of saying, "If you had faith (which you do not) . . .," the blunt meaning which would have resulted if he had used the full second class form.<sup>22</sup> However, it is possible to see an entirely different solution to this unusual construction. It is clear that the protasis is first class, a simple condition implying nothing as to whether Jesus' hearers actually had faith, and thus neither congratulating them nor criticizing them. Furthermore, it is clear from multitudes of examples that the apodosis of a first class condition may be of any form (declarative, hortatory, command, promise, rhetorical question, wish, etc.). A normal usage of ἄν with the imperfect which is not a second class apodosis does exist; it may well be the "potential" use of past tense indicatives for courteous or polite language or to express present necessity, obligation, possibility, or propriety.<sup>23</sup> Applying this grammatical usage to this passage, the sense becomes, in expanded paraphrase, "If you have faith, you *could* say to this mountain. . .," or, "it would be right and proper for you to say. . .," or, "if you have faith there is nothing you cannot ask for."

*John 8:39.* "If you are Abraham's children, you would be doing the works of your father" may also be an example of a mixed condition, with a first class protasis to soften the harshness of the statement. The textual tradition would suggest this understanding, whether the United Bible Society preferred reading ἐποιεῖτε or the Byzantine text ἄν ἐποιεῖτε is followed. In this instance, the explanation of the apodosis as a potential indicative, suggested for the preceding example, is not agreeable to the sense. Another reading, the imperative ποιεῖτε, followed by the NASB, would be a regular first class condition.

*Heb 11:15.* "If they were remembering the place from which they went out, they would have an opportunity to return" also involves a textual variation. The apodosis is clearly of the second class. In the

<sup>20</sup>A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 1022.

<sup>21</sup>N. Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965) 51-52.

<sup>22</sup>See my note on Turner's questionable understanding of the significance of the first class condition as reflected in his treatment of this passage in my preceding article, "First Class Conditions," 81, n. 17.

<sup>23</sup>See my discussion of this idiom earlier in this article. Also, R. Law, "Imperfect of 'Obligation' etc., in the N.T.," *ExpT* 30 (1919), 330ff.

UBS text the protasis has its verb in the present indicative and is thus of the first class. But the Byzantine text, accepted here by Westcott and Hort, has the imperfect tense, making the whole a normal second class condition. Here the time reference is actually past, even though imperfects, according to the rule discussed earlier, would be considered by some to signal a *present* contrary to fact. Perhaps the writer uses this "present" form from the same vantage point as in the preceding verse, which uses the "historical present" to express vividly a past situation. Or perhaps the present time reference in both verses is the "gnomic present"; it is *always* or characteristically true that if someone keeps looking back there are opportunities to go back. The use of the durative imperfect stresses the continuing situation: "if they were remembering . . . they would be having continuing opportunity to return."

*John 19:11.* "You would have no authority over me if it had not been given you from above." The problem here also is the time reference. If the verb of the protasis is taken as ἦν δεδομένον, a periphrastic pluperfect, then the time reference would be past, "If it had not been given . . ." If the verb is understood to be ἦν alone, with the perfect participle functioning as a predicate adjective, then the imperfect verb might be signaling a present contrary to fact: "if it were not (now) an authority which has been given you. . ." It is probably a distinction without a difference. In either case, the imperfect in the apodosis indicates the present situation.

# THE ETHICS OF INFLATION: A BIBLICAL CRITIQUE OF THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES\*

WILLIAM J. LARKIN, JR.

*Inflation is the creation of excess purchasing media or credit beyond that which represents the wealth, the production of goods and services, of a country. It violates the biblical commands to have just weights and not steal. Its immoral consequences are the oppression of the poor, especially the elderly; the promotion of sloth and covetousness; and the destabilization of society.*

\* \* \*

## INTRODUCTION

**I**NFLATION has become a main feature of most national economies around the world. Aside from the notable exceptions of Switzerland (1.3%) and West Germany (4%), most inflation rates during the mid and late 1970s hovered near the double digit mark.<sup>1</sup> For the past ten years the cumulative rate of inflation has been 112.9% in the U.S.A. In order to maintain the same after-tax disposable income, with the same buying power, a person who earned \$7,500 in 1970 would have to receive \$16,188 today. If inflation continues at the same rate for the next decade, that person would have to be earning \$39,188 in 1990 to be as well off as he was with \$7,500 in 1970.<sup>2</sup> In fact, if the performance of personal income growth over the past decade is any indication, the U.S. wage earner will be able neither to maintain the size of his after-tax income nor its buying power after the effects of inflation. Tax Foundation research has discovered that for the typical family of four the median income has increased from

\*This paper was originally given at the 1980 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society and reflects the economic conditions of that time.

<sup>1</sup>"Is Inflation Really Coming Under Control?" *U.S. News and World Report* 83 (October 17, 1977) 80.

<sup>2</sup>"The Double Whammy of Taxes and Inflation," *U.S. News and World Report* 89 (July 14, 1980) 47.

\$9,750 in 1970 to \$19,950 this year, i.e., 105%. Taxes rose at a faster pace, so that after-tax income only grew from \$8,412 ten years ago to \$16,999 today, i.e., 99%. When the present median after-tax income is adjusted for inflation and represented in 1970 dollars, it is \$7,976. This means that, even though today the head of the household is earning 105% more dollars than in 1970, the typical family of four is actually less well off by \$436 (1970 dollars).<sup>3</sup> Most persons react to such facts and figures with the sentiment expressed by a housewife on a recent TV commercial, "I'm no longer trying to beat inflation. I'd settle for a tie."

What causes inflation? Is it a combination of impersonal forces in the present national and world economic systems over which individuals have no control? Or, is inflation the result of the decisions of individuals in a position to influence the direction of our economic life? If it is the latter, then it is legitimate to investigate the causes and consequences of the act of "inflation creation." And it is appropriate in the light of biblical ethical norms to critique these aspects of inflation.<sup>4</sup>

A simple definition of inflation is an increase in the supply of money, purchasing media, in an economy which exceeds the increase in the value of goods and services produced. Inflation shows itself as constantly rising wages and prices. Indeed, in an inflationary economy wages and prices increase at a rate greater than the increase in productivity. For example, in the United States, average non-farm business wages were going up in the late 1970s at an annual rate of 8.5–9%.<sup>5</sup> Productivity on the part of the workers, however, was only going up 2%. In order to meet their payrolls, companies had to increase their prices not 2%, which would have been in line with the industries' true, increased productivity, but 8.5–9%. From the wages perspective this means that 6.5–7% more dollars were rewarding the same level of productivity. From the price perspective, it means that 6.5–7% more dollars were chasing the same amount of goods and services on the market. Where did this excess of purchasing media come from? To answer that question is to identify the cause of inflation.

#### MONEY AND PURCHASING MEDIA

Before we can intelligibly identify the cause of inflation, it is necessary to review a basic definition of money and purchasing media

<sup>3</sup>L. Cook, "Real Income Less than in 1970, Study Shows," *The State* 89 (October 18, 1980) 1.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. F. H. Popell, "How Inflation undermines Morality," *Business Week* (May 5, 1980) 20; J. Train, "Moral Fever Chart," *Forbes* 125 (May 26, 1980) 150-51.

<sup>5</sup>*U.S. News and World Report* 83 (October 17, 1977) 81.



and the sources of their generation in our economy. Webster's *New World Dictionary* (1975)<sup>6</sup> presents in its first definition of money the popular understanding of the term. It defines money as "stamped pieces of metal, or any paper notes, authorized by a government as a medium of exchange." To the popular mind money is the coins and paper bills used for daily economic transactions. But there is another definition of money which Webster lists second. Money is "wealth." To understand inflation one must think of money according to this second definition. To distinguish money as wealth, a medium of exchange of economic value, from money as coinage and paper currency, we are going to designate these latter items as purchasing media. This will also enable us to relate these two phenomena in our discussion of the role of each in America's modern banking and finance system.

Money, then, is a medium of exchange of economic value, wealth. In an economic system, the members labor in the production of goods and services. As a payment for their labor they receive money, something of equal value to the labor they have contributed. This money then becomes a claim check when the laborer turns consumer. He can use it to purchase goods and services from the economy's marketplace. Outside of a barter economy, where payment is made in kind, the commodity which a society decides to use as money must have four characteristics. It must be storable. It must be divisible into units. It must be relatively stable in quantity over time so that it may serve as a standard in terms of which to reckon the value of other goods and services, whose quantity fluctuates. Most importantly, it must be recognized as having a store of economic value. That is, it must be universally recognized as having intrinsic economic worth. Precious metals such as gold and silver meet these requirements and throughout much of economic history have been used as money.<sup>7</sup>

In modern times the use of paper as purchasing media to represent money developed. As the precious metals money began to

<sup>6</sup>Webster's *New World Dictionary of the American Language*, ed. D. B. Guralink, (New revised pocket-size edition; New York: Popular Library, 1975) 389.

<sup>7</sup>The intrinsic economic value of precious metals stems from two characteristics. First, it takes much labor to wrest the ore from the ground. Miners sift through a ton of earth and rock to extract an average 0.17 ounce of gold (E. & P. O. d'Aulaire, "All That Glitter—It's Gold!" *Reader's Digest* 117, No. 703 [November, 1980] 99). This labor invests intrinsic economic value in the metal. Second, the property of being virtually indestructible gives longevity, if not eternity, to the metal and commends itself to mankind as something precious. O. A. Piper (*The Christian Meaning of Money* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965] 5) claims that gold's "numinous" character, its being regarded in ancient times as a manifestation of deity on earth, is what gave it its value.

accumulate, societies developed storehouses, banks, where that money could be kept safely. These banks issued paper certificates to the customer who could then use the paper as a purchasing medium in his business transactions. There was no inherent economic value in the paper. What it represented, the precious metal in storage, was what had value. Each piece of paper was assigned a weight unit of a precious metal which it represented, e.g., one dollar originally was 1/20 of an ounce of gold. As modern commercial banking matured in the last century in the United States, it devised a way to expand the amount of paper certificates in circulation so that they would represent the increase in the goods and services produced beyond the supply of precious metals on deposit. Banks issued commercial loans in the form of short term notes to industries so that businessmen could pay wages and other expenses of production which were due as the goods were on their way to market. These loans, equal to the value of the goods and services produced, would release purchasing media into the economy. Thus these loans would allow the supply of purchasing media to increase equivalent to the real growth in wealth, economic value, of the economy. For example, between 1865 and 1940 wholesale and retail trade multiplied more than 20 times. The commercial short term loan procedure provided the purchasing media to cover this expansion even though the U.S. gold stock grew only 10 times. In fact, fifty times the purchasing media was in circulation in 1940 as was presented in 1865. This covered the country's increase in productivity—wealth—over that period.

Today, however, the banking system operates with a different understanding of the nature of purchasing media. It still functions as a medium of exchange. But no longer is it thought necessary to have money, i.e., a fixed amount of precious metal, backing each unit of the purchasing media. In 1934 the United States went off the gold standard internally. This meant that citizens could no longer exchange paper certificates for gold. Since then, the government has not consistently maintained a fixed relationship between the precious metal, with its store of economic value, and the paper issued. With gold prices in the \$500-\$600 of an ounce range, today a dollar will buy not 1/20 but only 1/600 of an ounce of gold. In 1971 the government decided no longer to exchange gold for dollars when foreign governments so requested. As every piece of paper purchasing media now attests, it is no longer a silver or gold certificate which a citizen could exchange for the equivalent amount of the precious metal. Rather, it is a note. The pieces of purchasing media declare themselves to be "legal tender for all debts, public and private." If there is no recognized backing, how can these notes continue to function as purchasing media for economic transactions? They can be

used "because the government decrees it is money, and because we all accept it."<sup>8</sup> It is the public's confidence in the strength of the American economy and how well the government is able to maintain a stable money supply which determines the public's continuing acceptance of government-issued purchasing media without precious metals backing and convertibility.

Why did the government, with advice from economists and bankers, introduce this redefinition of purchasing media? Why was the discipline of a precious metals standard removed? In the midst of an economic depression in the 1930s such a step was taken to allow the expansion of credit in the private sector of the economy in the hope that this would foster continued investment as well as ongoing consumer demand in the economy. It was hoped that these in turn would assure continuing growth and prosperity for the economy. Such a move permitted unchecked government deficit spending, also for the purpose of stimulating the economy.

Actually, the removal of the gold standard was the logical result of a practice which bankers had engaged in for some time. They noticed that when the precious metals, gold and silver, were deposited with them and certificates were issued, very few of the certificates were ever cashed in for the metal. The customers were content to trade paper certificates among themselves. Bankers, with an eye to profit, could not let those assets in gold and silver lie idle. They put them to work by offering to loan out at interest other certificates (actually, paper notes) which were backed by the same metal. They would treat some of their assets in gold as a reserve to cover any demand they might encounter, but they would feel free to offer the rest in the form of certificates as loans. Putting more paper certificates in circulation than there was gold in storage tended to cheapen the value of all the paper certificates. As William Simon, former Secretary of the Treasury, explains, "When you produce too much of anything, the price goes down."<sup>9</sup> The extent of such expansion of credit today may be illustrated by the following example. Currently, the reserve requirement on demand deposits, checking accounts, for member banks of the Federal Reserve ranges from 7% to 16.25% depending on the total size of the demand deposit assets.<sup>10</sup> If one took a 16% reserve figure and calculated the amount of loan which could be generated by demand deposits of \$100 million, the final total

<sup>8</sup>P. A. Samuelson, *Economics: Introductory Analysis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964) 274.

<sup>9</sup>"Carter Lacks Political Courage to Attack Inflation" (interview with William E. Simon), *U.S. News and World Report* 84 (April 24, 1978) 23.

<sup>10</sup>*Federal Reserve Bulletin* (September, 1980) A-8.

would be \$600 million, six times the original assets.<sup>11</sup> While there was a gold standard and the option of converting paper certificates into gold, alert citizens could respond to the overextension of credit by cashing in their certificates for the metal. In this way discipline would be restored and the money supply (amount of purchasing media) stabilized. By removing the convertibility option the likelihood of rapid deflation and runs on banks decreased, but the discipline was also removed.

The value of the gold standard for creating price stability can be demonstrated historically. The following is a list of periods of currency stability for European powers who were on the gold standard during the nineteenth century.

France	1814 to 1914	100 years
Netherlands	1861 to 1914	98 years
Great Britain	1821 to 1914	93 years
Switzerland	1850 to 1936	86 years
Belgium	1832 to 1914	82 years <sup>12</sup>

The American experience has been similar. During the fifteen years after America's return to the gold standard in 1879, prices were non-inflationary. In fact, they even declined 33%, correcting the inflation of the previous post-Civil War period. But this price decline was not at the expense of industrial productivity. During this period, industrial production increased at the most rapid rate (6% annually) for the most prolonged time in the nation's history.<sup>13</sup>

Even before the United States went off the gold standard, the federal government had devised a way to add purchasing media to the money supply which did not represent a growth in the nation's productivity. This way was the open-market operations of the Federal Reserve System created in 1913. When the Federal Reserve Board's Open Market Committee sees that the total money supply is not growing at a rate it deems sufficient to sustain economic growth, it purchases government securities. It pays for them with a check backed by Federal Reserve notes. In this way, purchasing media which does not represent wealth in terms of precious metals on deposit or increased productivity is introduced into the money supply. The Federal Reserve can also contract the money supply by selling securities, causing the reverse of the generation process to occur.

<sup>11</sup>"How Money is 'Created' Out of Nothing," *Reader's Digest* 14, No. 681 (January, 1979) 53.

<sup>12</sup>J. T. Gibbs, ed., "Why Gold?" *Economic Education Bulletin* 12, No. 5 (1972) 2.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 23.

The Federal Reserve system adds purchasing media to the money supply in another way. It is the vehicle through which government deficit spending is monetized. The Federal Reserve supplies the federal government with newly created purchasing media to cover that portion of government deficit spending which the government has not provided for by borrowing from individual and private investors in the money market. Again, this purchasing media is simply created by the government and does not represent any real wealth in terms of precious metals on deposit or growth in the nation's productivity.

#### MONEY IN BIBLICAL TIMES

Since we wish to evaluate these financial practices by biblical ethical norms, it is necessary to describe the nature and function of money in Bible times. The medium of exchange for economic transactions went through three developmental stages during the history covered by the Bible. First, men did business by barter (1 Kgs 5:10-11). Second, people exchanged metal (gold, silver, copper, iron) for desired objects or to pay tribute (Gen 23:13-17; Deut 24:14-15). Third, a coinage, minted metal of fixed weight and purity, came into use. This third method was not used until the exile (Ezra 2:69) and continued through NT times. The most detailed descriptions of business transactions involving money occur before the exile and reflect the second stage of economic transactions. The practice was to give the price of a good in so many weight units of metal (e.g., four hundred shekels of silver, Gen 23:16; 47:15; 2 Sam 24:24). Then, if agreeable to both parties, the buyer would weigh out in a scale his silver or gold in the form of ingots, bars, tongues (Josh 7:21), heads of animals, or jewelry such as bracelets and rings (Gen 24:53; Exod 22:6; Judg 8:24; Isa 61:10). The weight, against which the quantity of silver or gold was determined, was a weight of bronze, iron, or dressed stone. The purchase of the cave at Machpelah was concluded as follows (Gen 24:14-16):

Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you? So bury your dead." And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, commercial standard.

<sup>14</sup>H. Hamburger, "Money, Coins," *IDB* 3, 423ff.

This transaction shows that the basic understanding and use of money was as a medium of exchange of economic value. Precious metals divided into weight units seem to have a recognized economic store value which enabled them to be used as a standard for measuring and expressing the value of goods and services (1 Kgs 21:2). Purity and weight were checked to make sure that the quality and quantity of the metal offered did indeed match the value or price assigned to the goods for which it was exchanged. The transaction was a step beyond barter, but an important step. A recognized medium of exchange gave the buyer more freedom of choice in his purchasing (Deut 14:25-26). Yet, since the metal was not yet minted coinage, the cumbersome task of checking the weight of the metal for each transaction was still necessary. This stage of economic transaction, then, clearly revealed the close connection between economic value and medium of exchange. All prices were given in the weight units of a precious metal.

#### WHAT CAUSES INFLATION?

With this understanding of money and purchasing media and the sources of their generation, let us return to our basic question: What causes inflation? What is the source of the excessive amount of purchasing media in the money supply? From our description of the way purchasing media are generated in our economy, the answers come readily. The banking community's practice of overextending credit, namely loaning out checking account money on more than a short-term commercial loan basis, causes inflation. The low reserve requirements allow the credit offerings to generate an amount of purchasing media six times the value of the original assets.

Second, the Federal Reserve is a special source of excess purchasing media when it buys government securities and issues, "creates," unbacked purchasing media to pay for them. These payments increase banking assets which can then be loaned out and which participate in the purchasing media generation process. For the first six months of 1980 the Federal Open Market Committee has overseen a growth in the money supply which equals an annual rate of 2.8%.<sup>15</sup> But the growth in productivity for the first six months of 1980 is only at an annual rate of -3.95%.<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that in the third quarter the money supply was again advancing at a annual rate of 17.2%.

<sup>15</sup>"Blaming the Fed: Why it's in Hot Water," *U.S. News and World Report* 89 (October 20, 1980) 78.

<sup>16</sup>"Mid-Year Outlook: When will business bounce back?" *U.S. News and World Report* 89 (July 14, 1980) 20; "More Fuel for Backers of Tax Cut," *U.S. News and World Report* 89 (July 28, 1980) 56.



Third, purchasing media is added to the money supply which does not represent an increase in the economy's output, when the federal government chooses to finance its deficit spending by monetizing the debt through the Federal Reserve System. Of the present \$870 billion federal deficit, \$118.8 billion has been funded by the Federal Reserve System.<sup>17</sup> Milton Friedman's conclusion is valid. The federal government is the engine of inflation, "the only one there is."<sup>18</sup>

With this heavy emphasis on the banking community's credit practices and the causes of inflation, the personal dimension is being ignored. This discussion has bypassed the individual because he is not the immediate cause of inflation. No individual citizen can create purchasing media not representing a real increase in productivity. Only the federal government or banks can do that. Now it is true that greed, motivating individuals to live beyond their means through credit buying, has created a climate of demand to which banks have responded with inflationary credit practices. And it is true that special interest groups have demanded government transfer payments and supported deficit financing as the way to pay for them. And politicians have yielded to these pressures and let inflation, not government revenue collections, do the taxing. Individual greed in these two ways is responsible ultimately for inflation. But, because this greed, often called "inflationary expectations," is so often identified as a direct cause of inflation and the banking and federal government practices are so often ignored, this discussion is concentrating on the direct causes of inflation. Indeed, individual greed has existed throughout

<sup>17</sup>"Public Debt heads toward \$1 trillion," *U.S. News and World Report* 89 (July 28, 1980) 55; cf. T. C. Gaines, *Techniques of Treasury Debt Management* (New York: The Graduate School of Columbia University and Free Press of Glencoe, 1962) 240-42.

<sup>18</sup>"Milton Friedman Interview," *Newsweek* 91 (May 29, 1978) 81. Some economists will object and call such an identification "an oversimplification" (Paul A. Samuelson Interview, *Newsweek* 91 [May 29, 1978] 81). Michael Blumenthal, former Secretary of the Treasury, contends, "It is too easy to simply point to government and say, 'You do your job properly and we wouldn't have inflation'" (*U.S. News and World Report* 84 [April 24, 1978] 21). While he admits the government's partial responsibility, he also points to other causal factors: wage settlements which exceed productivity, excessive profits, OPEC oil prices, and the weather. It is difficult to maintain that corporations are indeed making excessive real profits in this inflationary time. The weather has not been a consistently significant factor. The remaining two causes, wage and prices while they may contribute to the upward inflationary push do so only in reaction to the inflationary situation of too much money present to buy too few goods. They do not create the money. Rather, the excess money creates the opportunity for wage settlements in excess of productivity. If such money were not present in the economy, the wage earners could not be paid it, for nobody would be able to afford the higher prices which the employer must charge on his product in order to meet his inflated payroll. High wages and prices are a reaction to, not a cause of, inflation.

human history both in times of inflation and times of price stability. It is a given of man's sinful nature (Mark 7:20-23). To concentrate exclusively or primarily on it as the cause of inflation will prevent one from focusing on an ethical evaluation of the immediate causes and developing a perspective from which one can find a solution.

#### A BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF INFLATION

How may these three causes of inflation be evaluated biblically? Two ethical norms, taught in Scripture, come into play.

##### *Just weights*

First, the Lord directs the Israelites to use just weights in their economic dealings (Lev 19:35-36; Deut 25:13-16). They should not carry in their bags stones of varying weights which are marked as being the same weight. This command was intended to prevent a person from measuring out on the scales produce with the use of a light weight, thus providing in the exchange less than full weight, or full value. Such practices were evidently a problem throughout Israel's history, for Micah records God's question in judgment (Micah 6:10-12):

Is there yet a man in the wicked house, along with treasures of wickedness, and a short measure that is cursed? Can I justify wicked scales and a bag of deceptive weights? For the rich men of the city are full of violence, her residents speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

God's hatred of such practices is so great that he calls them an abomination (Deut 25:16; Prov 20:10-23), a term usually reserved for his evaluation of idols and false worship (Deut 7:25-26; 12:31; 13:14; 17:4; 18:9, 12; 20:18; 27:15; 32:16). On the other hand, to use just and full weights brings a promise of blessing, "that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you" (Deut 25:15).

This command applies not simply to barter exchange but also to transactions involving the weighing out of the recognized medium of exchange, precious metals. As we have noted, in ancient Israel before the exile, the value or price of goods was stated in terms of units of weight of a precious metal, silver (50 shekels of silver, 2 Sam 24:24). The transaction was accomplished when the silver was weighed out (Gen 23:16; Exod 22:17; Jer 32:9-10; cf. Ezra 8:25-26, 28, 30, 33). If the weights were not their proper weight, if they were too light, then the amount of silver exchanged for the goods would be too little. The

weight unit of money, a shekel of silver, in that transaction would in effect be devalued.

Our modern money and banking system with its purchasing media in the form of paper money and its computerized ledgers seems very far removed from a pre-coinage economy assumed by this biblical directive. How can a command which envisions two men dickering, striking a bargain, producing scales and weights to determine the price in crude pieces of metal, be legitimately applicable to a twentieth-century paper money economy? The command can be binding because the basic elements in the economic exchange are still the same. Today a buyer presents some units of purchasing media, paper money, equal in value to the desired goods, and exchanges them with the seller for the goods. Every part of the transaction has an equivalent in the pre-coinage economy. The one difference is the nature of the value that is attached to the purchasing media. Since it has no backing in terms of precious metal, its value is not stated in terms of weight units of a given metal. Rather, the value is simply represented by the number of units printed on the face of the paper bill. And the possibility of changing the value of the paper is present as it was when Old Testament traders had to weigh out precious metal. As one made the same amount of silver go further by using a "light" weight unit, so one can make the same unit of purchasing media go further by printing more pieces of paper of the same denomination (e.g., \$10). The result is the same. Each piece of paper is actually worth less than the value assigned to it just as a "light weighted" amount of precious metal actually weighs and therefore is worth less than its stated weight unit.

This practice of changing money's value has been present at all the developmental stages of business transactions. When ancient societies developed coinage as a medium of exchange, the government determined and then guaranteed the weight and purity of amounts of the precious metal by fashioning them into coins stamped with the unit of currency. The government could change the value of a given coin by clipping the coin so that the weight was actually less than what was stated on the coin. Another method was to mix the precious metal with a base metal. For example, about A.D. 64 Nero "slightly debased the denarius (silver) raising the percentage of base metal to about 10 per cent and reduced the weight of both coins (silver and gold), the denarius to one ninety-sixth of a pound (from one eighty-fourth), the aureus (gold) to one forty-fifth (from one forth-second)."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup>A. H. M. Jones, "Inflation under the Roman Empire," *The Roman Economy: Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History* (ed. P. A. Brunt; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974) 191.

By either method the result was money whose value was debased or lessened. Though the monetary unit remained the same, the amount of silver or gold had been reduced, and hence also the economic store of value.

When modern societies developed paper purchasing media as a medium of exchange, the possibility of decreasing the value of any given unit of currency did not cease. In fact the procedure was greatly simplified. No longer were "light" false weights necessary. A government did not even have to take the trouble to clip or add a base metal to the coinage. All the government had to do was to introduce into the money supply more purchasing media than represented the value of the productivity of the nation. This had and has the same effect of lessening the value of each denominated paper bill or dollar credited to a checking or savings account, as if that dollar value in metal or coin form had been lessened in weight. Therefore, it is quite legitimate to apply the biblical command against false weights to this governmental practice of introducing excess purchasing media into the money supply whether by fiscal (deficit financing) or monetary (Federal Reserve Open Market operations) means. The overextension of credit by the banking community with the government sanction also violates this biblical command. In sum, a debasing of a medium of exchange, whether a piece of precious metal falsely weighed, a coined clipped or combined with a base metal, or a piece of paper whose numbers are multiplied through the deficit financing or monetary stimulation process, is a defrauding, a lying, which is an abomination to the Lord.

### *Theft*

The second biblical norm which one should apply to this inflationary process is the eighth command: "Thou shalt not steal" (Exod 20:15). When excess purchasing media which do not represent the value of goods and services produced are introduced into the economy, it must get its value somewhere. In everyday business transactions one cannot distinguish a piece of paper which does not represent the value of goods and services produced from one which does. Both will be used in the marketplace to buy goods and services. Therefore, both will be treated as representing economic value. But the presence of the excess means that each piece of paper money must now represent a smaller portion of the economic value of productivity. For instance, let us picture the economy as a table with \$100 of goods and services produced on it. Five laborers who contributed equally to this production each have \$20 to spend on these goods. The government gives excess purchasing media in the amount of \$20 each to two other persons who now come to the table. The same goods and

services can now command \$140. But the laborer's buying power has decreased from being able to claim 20% of the market goods to being able to buy 14%. In effect, 6% of value has been stolen from one citizen and given to another. Between 1940 and 1975, the total loss of wealth or value of saving accounts in the United States due to inflation was \$1.6 trillion, that is, a total of \$38,900 per American family for the period, or \$1,081 per family per year.<sup>20</sup>

Because the government issues much of the monetized deficit in transfer payments to special need groups, inflation is actually a method for redistribution of wealth. Those who contribute little or nothing to the nation's productivity receive money whose value has actually been stolen away from the value of others' hard-earned dollars. Those who recognize that this is happening and approve of it do not hesitate to call it redistribution. "The recent redistribution of income through inflation may test our national resolve to help the poor, elderly, disadvantaged, and dispossessed at home and abroad."<sup>21</sup> An area in which this redistribution is taking place is higher education.<sup>22</sup> College tuition rose for the 1980-81 academic year 15.6% at private colleges, 9.9% at public universities. The current federal government aid commitment to students is \$4.4 billion. According to an administrator at Fordham, "the working poor and the struggling middle class are being squeezed out of private schools," since the aid goes primarily to low income students. J. A. Crowl of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* concludes, "Middle-class students who would have gone to private colleges may end up in public institutions or community colleges." Inflation caused by deficit spending, on the one hand, prices private colleges out of the market for working poor and middle class students. On the other hand, a portion of that deficit is federal grants to low income students who may then use it to attend private colleges. A redistribution of wealth and opportunity has occurred.

Such an analysis is not intended to say that the government should not help "the poor, elderly, disadvantaged, and dispossessed." It is rather the *method* which is being called "stealing." Instead of balancing the budget by having taxes match spending and in that way redistribute wealth to the poor and disadvantaged through the consent of the governed, the Congress chooses to let inflation do the taxing and redistributing of the wealth without the people having a direct say. Therein lies the breaking of the eighth commandment.

<sup>20</sup>E. C. Harwood, *The Money Mirage* (Hamilton, Bermuda: Freedom Trust 1976) 8-9.

<sup>21</sup>J. W. Kuhn, "Inflation and the Middle," *Christianity and Crisis* 35 (June 9, 1975) 134.

<sup>22</sup>"Inflation Watch," *Business Week* (September 15, 1980) 40-41.

## CONSEQUENCES OF INFLATION

Three major consequences of inflation need to be evaluated by biblical teaching. First, inflation oppresses the poor, especially the elderly on fixed incomes. Second, it destroys the ethical values which govern economic life. Third, inflation destabilizes national life.

In 1970 an adequate annual retirement income included \$9,000 (private pension funds) plus Social Security. By 1977 because of inflation that income had experienced a 25% drop in buying power. This was true even though the Social Security benefits had increased by 98%. If the 1970s rate of inflation (7.4%) obtains for the 1980s (currently the nation is running at a 12% rate), by 1985 the buying power for private pension funds will decrease to one-third of its original 1970 value.<sup>23</sup> Inflation is clearly oppressing the elderly on fixed incomes by silently robbing the value of their savings for retirement. Ironically, the very people which the government is trying to aid through cost-of-living increases in Social Securities benefits are actually being hurt. For these Social Security increases are largely funded by inflation-causing deficit spending. The Scripture clearly teaches that it is wrong to oppress (Exod 22:21-24; Jer 7:6; 22:3; Zech 7:10) or prevent justice (Deut 24:17; 27:19) for the widow. The widow of biblical times and the elderly on fixed income today are in very much the same economic position. They both are dependent on saving or aid from others to support themselves. Therefore, it is legitimate to apply these censures to this consequence of inflation. One must not forget, however, that care for the widow, orphan, and alien was also enjoined (Deut 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:19-21; 26:12-13). But it was never to be done in such a way that what was justly due them was withheld. God declares himself to be especially concerned for protecting (Prov 15:25; Ps 146:9), caring for (Jer 49:11), and executing justice for the widow (Deut 10:18; cf. Isa 1:17). The economically helpless need support, preferably through the family, then the church (1 Tim 3:3-16). If the government has a role it should not be by a method which increases the burden on the elderly through inflation which brings an even higher cost of living.

Inflation also destroys ethical values which should govern economic life. F. Harvey Popell, who has twenty years experience with Latin America's inflationary economies, comments:

In an inflationary economy, on the one hand, moral values of honesty, industry, and saving are not only no guarantee at all of a solid future,

<sup>23</sup>"Inflation is wrecking the private pension system," *Business Week* (May 12, 1980) 92.



but such values may indeed represent an irrational course of action. This phenomenon is most clearly seen in the case of saving. Why save for a rainy day when one's savings won't buy an umbrella when needed? But the problem is equally evident in other areas. Why be scrupulously honest and keep one's shoulder to the wheel seeking long-term personal growth when there is no long term on the horizon? A more rational approach would be to try to get as much as you can, as fast as you can, with as little effort as you can, almost any way you can.

What does this mean? For the work force it means throwing out the window the old concept of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. What pay is fair when you and your family are constantly playing (and invariably losing) catch-up with prices?<sup>24</sup>

Biblical teaching supports the moral values of industry and savings (delayed consumption) and condemns their opposites—sloth and covetousness. In the OT the wisdom literature praises the virtue of diligence in labor as a precious possession (Prov 12:27) which will bring its reward in material possessions (Prov 10:4; 12:24; 21:5). The NT encourages the same virtue but with a different motive, service to the ultimate employer, the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 6:6; Col 3:23). A Christian should work ἐκ ψυχῆς, with all his soul, heartily, as to the Lord. The negative quality, sloth, is roundly condemned in Proverbs. Its end result is poverty (Prov 6:6, 9; 19:25; 24:30-34). Its chief drive is covetous craving (Prov 13:4; 21:25-26; 26:13-16). The slothful person desires to receive economic rewards without having contributed his labor to their production. Inflation tends to destroy the connection between productivity and wages in a person's thought about his remuneration. He comes to expect a "cost of living" pay raise in order to keep pace with inflation whether his productivity has increased or not. Such expectations reinforce the value of sloth since one receives more pay for the same or less work.<sup>25</sup> They do not encourage the value of all-out effort and diligence. Inflation, which creates the climate for such expectations, must be judged unbiblical.

An inflationary economy also encourages the value of covetous consumption and destroys the virtue of saving. If prices are never going to be lower than they are today, then it is wiser to spend now and even borrow to spend, than to save. Inflation will allow one to

<sup>24</sup>Popell, *Business Week* (May 5, 1980) 20.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. John Train's analysis: "The relative inflation rate seems to me to be a symptom, a fever chart on the industriousness and realism of the body politic, of the civic-mindedness of the people, and one has to deal with the syndrome, not the symptom" (*Forbes* 125 [May 26, 1980] 150). Train contends that when you take more out of a system than you put into it, a fever results. This is what inflation does.

pay back in cheaper dollars. The Scriptures clearly warn against greed and covetousness, beginning with the tenth commandment (Exod 20:17). Jesus teaches us to beware of it, for our lives are not the sum total of what we possess (Mark 7:33; Luke 12:15). The NT writers see it as idolatry, a characteristic of the unregenerate life, the root of all kinds of evil (Eph 4:19; 5:30; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 6:10; 2 Pet 2:14; Heb 13:5). On the other hand, delayed consumption in the form of savings and charitable giving to others is the way the Christian should use his economic resources. Savings is assumed in the directive that a person is responsible to provide for his family and if he does not he is "worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim 5:8). Although strictly speaking immediate charitable giving is not the same as savings, in that money is spent and not saved, it does differ from covetous consumption in the same way as savings, since the money is not spent on oneself for the immediate consumption of goods and services. Many times the NT stresses that the Christian should use his money to be rich toward God and lay up treasures in heaven by giving to meet human need (Luke 12:15, 33-34; Eph 4:28; 1 Tim 6:18-19). Again, inflation must be judged unbiblical in its consequences for it creates an economic environment in which it is wise to covetously consume and is foolish to save.

Finally, inflation generates destabilizing forces in the national life. There is the force of dishonest dealings. Since government is dishonest and "rips off" the citizen by lessening through inflation the value of his hard-earned dollars, many citizens feel justified in "stealing" tax revenues from the government through tax evasion. The Internal Revenue Service estimates that the level of unreported income is in excess of \$100 billion annually.<sup>26</sup> The Scriptures, however, emphasize as a Christian duty the full payment of taxes (Matt 22:21; Rom 13:7). There is the force of divisiveness as each special interest group, labor, management, and clients for government aid, battles for its share of the inflationary spiral in terms of higher wages, prices, and government grants. There is also the increased financial strains on the family as both mother and father must work to make ends meet. Inflation prevents individuals in the society from experiencing the kind of life which Paul asks us to pray for as we pray for our leaders: "a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and dignity" (1 Tim 2:2). Thus, such destabilizing forces as a consequence of inflation are unhealthy and unbiblical.

<sup>26</sup>Popell, *Business Week* (May 5, 1980) 20.

## SUMMARY

Inflation is the creation of excess purchasing media or credit beyond that which represents the wealth, the production of goods and services, of a country. The banking community and the federal government are responsible for this excess. The biblical teaching on honest dealing speaks to this practice and exposes it as unbiblical and immoral. The consequences of inflation include the oppression of those on fixed incomes, especially the elderly. The OT teachings concerning proper treatment of the widow censures this result of inflation. A promotion of unbiblical values of sloth and covetousness and a discouragement of the biblical idea of diligence and savings also result from inflation. Finally, the destabilization of society which occurs in the wake of inflation creates a situation contrary to the "quiet and peaceful life" which Scripture envisages as the goal of good government.



# PALESTINIAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE DATE OF THE CONQUEST: DO TELLS TELL TALES?

EUGENE H. MERRILL

*The date of Israel's conquest of Canaan is predicated basically on the assumption that it was a military enterprise which, therefore, must have resulted in extensive destruction throughout the land. This being so, it is reasonable to expect that archaeological research would attest to this destruction. The date of the strata associated with the destruction would then yield the date of the conquest. The fallacy of this hypothesis is that the OT record does not allow for a conquest involving massive devastation; in fact, it takes quite the opposite position. It follows that any archaeological attestation of destruction cannot be used to date the conquest. Such dating must be deduced from the biblical literary data themselves, a process which allows a date compatible with the early date of the Exodus.*

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IT may seem to be an exercise in futility and boring redundancy to explore once more the question of the date of Israel's conquest of Canaan under Joshua. The two prevailing views, that of an early fourteenth century<sup>1</sup> and that of a mid- to late-thirteenth century date,<sup>2</sup> appear to be so firmly entrenched among the scholarly segments which hold them that there is no further need for discussion.

<sup>1</sup>See conveniently John J. Davis and John C. Whitcomb, *A History of Israel from Conquest to Exile* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) 17-18; E. H. Merrill, *An Historical Survey of the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1966, 1979) 106-8, 155; Leon Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970) 94-101.

<sup>2</sup>John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981) 130-33. Bright even appears to opt for a twelfth century date now (p. 133). Martin Noth (*The History of Israel* [New York: Harper & Row, 1960] 81) admits that the conquest could have begun as early as the Amarna period (ca. 1375 B.C.) but insists that it ended as late as 1100 B.C. For a 1230 B.C. date, see H. H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua* (London: Oxford University, 1950, 1970) 133. Of course, virtually no critical scholars

Indeed, it may well be that the opposing schools of thought can never find rapprochement, particularly if archaeological evidence continues to be adduced and interpreted by both sides in support of their respective conclusions. The thesis of this paper is that while both parties in the debate have cited and utilized the same evidence to prove vastly different propositions, the biblical data themselves have strangely been largely overlooked. What does the OT have to say about any reasonable expectation that archaeology can shed light on the perplexing problem of dating the Conquest? Does it possibly suggest a *via media*, that archaeology, far from being friend or foe, has nothing at all to say to the question?<sup>3</sup>

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A few years ago Bruce Waltke pointed in the right direction when he argued that one should not expect archaeological documentation for an early or any other date for the Conquest since it was clearly Joshua's policy not to destroy the population centers but only to "take" (לָקַח) them.<sup>4</sup> That is, the biblical account itself presupposes an interpretation quite to the contrary of that held by the vast majority of both conservative and liberal scholars.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, he says, if

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view the conquest as a homogeneous, united effort by twelve tribes under one leader and in one comparatively brief period of time.

<sup>3</sup>This has been expressed recently by J. Maxwell Miller but only by maintaining that "there was never an Israelite invasion of the sort envisioned in Josh. 1-12" ("Archaeology and the Israelite Conquest of Canaan: Some Methodological Observations," *PEQ* 109 [1977] 92). He correctly observes that there is little or no archaeological evidence for the conquest, no matter the date, but concludes that since the OT narrative presupposes vast destruction that narrative itself cannot be correct. Our thesis is that both the narrative and the "negative archaeological evidence" (Miller, 92) are correct when correctly interpreted.

<sup>4</sup>Bruce K. Waltke, "Palestinian Artifactual Evidence Supporting the Early Date for the Exodus," *BSac* 129 (1972) 35. M. F. Unger had pointed out the same thing nearly thirty years ago but did not follow up on his observations. See his *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954) 163-64.

<sup>5</sup>Thus, H. T. Frank (*Bible, Archaeology, and Faith* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1971] 95) states flatly, "... the conquest was sparked by a warlike invasion of the central highlands leaving in its wake a series of smoldering ruins where once-proud Canaanite cities had stood." Among these he includes Hebron, Eglon, Jarmuth, and Lachish. An evangelical scholar, R. K. Harrison, likewise assumes such a position when he points out that "Archaeological excavations along the route of the occupation have afforded clear indications of violence and destruction during the second half of the thirteenth century B.C. . . .," a period he associates with the Joshua conquest (*Old Testament Times* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970] 175-76). Similarly, K. A. Kitchen, who usually places the biblical testimony above any other, argues for a late exodus and conquest precisely on archaeological grounds. See his *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1966) 61-69.



the evidence were to indicate widespread and massive destruction of Canaanite sites in the early fourteenth century, the traditional conquest period, it would fly in the face of the biblical statements and would pose no end of embarrassment to the traditional view. On the other hand, such destruction, amply attested everywhere in the thirteenth century, can be attributed to the Joshua campaigns only by denying the clear biblical witness.

Though Waltke's suggestions were correct he did not pursue them fully nor make a convincing case exegetically for their relevance to the issue. In fact, he went on to argue that archaeology has validity when interpreted correctly, a point which is undeniable, but he appears to have failed to appreciate the two-edged nature of the archaeological evidence from most of the sites adduced in support of either date. When equally eminent and competent scholars can look at artifactual data and come to diametrically opposite conclusions based on them, it might be time to abandon the pursuit and follow up on Waltke's own suggestion that the biblical testimony and it alone is adequate to provide satisfying answers.<sup>6</sup>

#### THE MOSAIC CONQUEST POLICY

Central to the promise of YHWH to Israel concerning the land which he would give them in Canaan was the fact that it would become their property virtually intact.<sup>7</sup> They would need to fight for

<sup>6</sup>This paper will make no attempt to relate the date of the conquest to that of the exodus though we are persuaded that such a connection only confirms the position taken here that the conquest began ca. 1400 B.C. Neither biblical nor archaeological evidence militates against the early (mid-fifteenth century) date for the exodus. See now John J. Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest*, JSOT Supplement Series 5 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978) *passim*. Bimson in fact argues for a slightly earlier date than that of most conservative scholars.

<sup>7</sup>Only Canaanite sites will be considered here in detail since Canaan is specified as the land of inheritance to be given to Israel with ready-built structures. Of non-Canaanite cities, only the following in Transjordan are named in the records as having been either taken or destroyed: Heshbon (Num 21:25) and Aroer (Deut 2:36). Though Nelson Glueck's allegation that the Transjordan contained no sedentary population from ca. 1900-1300 was at one time almost universally accepted, recent research at Tell Hesban (Heshbon) indicates to some scholars that the site was occupied by people of some culture during the Late Bronze period. If this is correct it could, therefore, have been taken by the Israelites at 1400 B.C. See Bimson, *Redating*, 72. The OT narrative does not indicate that Israel destroyed Heshbon but, to the contrary, "took" (לָכַד) it and "dwelt . . . in Heshbon" (Num 21:25). One should not expect archaeological confirmation or denial of this. Aroer (now 'Ara'ir) was explored by E. Olávarri in 1964 and he showed that the site, though abandoned throughout the MB period, was occupied continuously in the LB through the mid-ninth century ("Sondages à 'Arô'er sur l'Arnon," *RB* 72 [1965] 91). This of course supports the OT picture of the "taking"

it, of course, but in only exceptional cases would it be necessary for them to destroy its cities and towns physically.<sup>8</sup>

The first statement of this policy is in the Book of the Covenant where, in Exod 23:24, YHWH commands Israel to put the Canaanite gods under the *הָרָם* and to destroy their *מִצְבֹּת*. There is no word here of the destruction of cities. In fact, the passage goes on with the promise of YHWH to drive the inhabitants of the land out gradually so that the land will not become uninhabitable (vv 23-30).<sup>9</sup>

En route to Canaan Moses reminded the people once again of the policy to be implemented in conquering and occupying the land (Num 33:50-56). They must drive out the inhabitants, destroy their cult objects, and take possession of the land. There is not a word about the destruction of the cities and/or buildings.

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of the city but not its destruction and means that Aroer, like Heshbon, can say nothing of the conquest date.

Moses' rehearsal of events in Transjordan describes the disposition of Heshbon, Aroer, and the other cities by saying "we took (*לכד*) all [Sihon's] cities at that time and totally destroyed (*החרם*) each 'city of men' (*עִיר מְהִימָה*) together with the women and children. . . ." (Deut 2:34). Since women and children are mentioned together, *עִיר מְהִימָה* can only refer to the male population. Again, there is no evidence of material devastation (see also Deut 3:5-6).

The only other relevant non-Canaanite towns are the Philistine cities Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, all of which were only "taken" (*לכד*), not destroyed, and not until after Joshua's death (Judg 1:18).

As for the cities of the Negev, only Arad and Hormah are mentioned by name (Num 21:1-3) and only the latter is said to have been destroyed (cf. Judg 1:17). Y. Aharoni has identified Arad with Tel Malḥata and Hormah with Tel Masos and has assigned both to the Hyksos (MB IIb) period ("Nothing Early and Nothing Late: Re-Writing Israel's Conquest," *BA* 29 [1976] 71). He maintains that there is no evidence of LB habitation of the Negev and so views the biblical conquest narrative as a conflation of traditions which include a Middle Bronze Age attack on Arad and Hormah by one or more tribes of Israel but having nothing to do with the conquest originally (p. 73).

<sup>8</sup>Another factor that should be mentioned is the expectation voiced by some scholars that Israelite seizure and occupation of Canaanite cities should be reflected by a cultural transition in each case. That is, Israel's imposition of its own material civilization upon existing Canaanite sites should be evident at 1400-1375 if the early date and the OT's own picture of the conquest are correct. However, most cultural historians recognize that there is virtually no difference between the material culture of the Hebrews and that of the Canaanites, so that one would be unable to tell where the one began and the other ended apart from decisive proof that a Hebrew destruction of a Canaanite site introduced a new occupation. But since our very argument is that the transition occurred at ca. 1400 and did not involve destruction, there can be no evidence archaeologically of a new, intrusive Hebrew culture. See, e.g., Frank, *Bible, Archaeology, and Faith*, 102.

<sup>9</sup>This implies also that not all the inhabitants of the land, even the Canaanites, were to be placed under the *הָרָם*. There was a principle of selectivity even in this policy. For the theological significance of *הָרָם* see L. J. Wood, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. by R. L. Harris, et al. (Chicago: Moody, 1980), s.v. *\*הָרָם*, 741-42.

In the reaffirmation of the covenant in the plains of Moab, Moses picks up the theme of conquest and reiterates the method to be followed in its execution. He states that the ancient promises made to the fathers are about to be fulfilled and that these include the possession and occupation of cities which they had not built as well as the seizure of houses, cisterns, vineyards, and olive-trees, all intact (Deut 6:10-11). They will not be required to destroy the cities of the land physically and then to rebuild them, but YHWH will graciously allow them to destroy or drive out the population and retain for their own use the abandoned and undamaged properties. The exception, of course, will be the pagan altars, **מִצְבֹּחַ**, **אֲשֵׁרִים**, and images (Deut 7:5; 12:2-4), all of which must be placed under **חָרָם** as Moses had previously instructed.

Other examples of the promise are in Deut 19:1-2 where, in connection with the establishment of the three cities of refuge in Canaan, Moses relates that they will simply be appropriations of Canaanite cities already existing and undamaged following the cutting off of their inhabitants.<sup>10</sup> Also very instructive in this respect is the "Manual of War" of Deuteronomy 20. It is here, if anywhere, that regulation concerning the disposition of conquered cities and peoples ought to be found.

The instruction is as follows. First of all, those cities which are "far off" (i.e., non-Canaanite) must be given an opportunity to become tributary to Israel. If they refuse to surrender, they will be besieged and, after capitulating, the male population must be totally destroyed. The women, children, cattle, and spoil, however, may be

<sup>10</sup>These cities are Kedesh of Naphtali, Shechem, and Hebron (Josh 20:7). Nothing is related of a destruction or capture of Kedesh or Shechem by Israel in the conquest, but Hebron, as we shall see, was certainly not destroyed (p. 116). Kedesh (modern Tell Abu Qudeis, 7 miles NNW of Hazor) was occupied in the LB period, with no evidence of destruction until well into the Iron Age (1200-1150). See B. Mazar, "The Sanctuary of Arad and the Family of Hobab the Kenite," *JNES* 24 (1965) 301, n. 21. Archaeology thus does not contradict the statement of Deut 19:1-2 that Israel, having defeated the Canaanites, will "succeed them and dwell in their cities," three of which are the cities of refuge. As to Shechem, it is well known that it fell to the Hapiru as attested in EA 289 (see W. F. Albright, "Akkadian Letters," in *ANET*, 489): "Or shall we do like Lab'ayu, who gave the land of Shechem to the 'Apiru?" While one no doubt should not make the facile equation Hapiru = Hebrew, here at least it is tempting to see something of Joshua's activity. In any event, as E. F. Campbell and J. F. Ross suggest, "The Late Bronze inhabitants of the site were content merely to re-use and rebuild the structures of their predecessors" ("The Excavation of Shechem and the Biblical Tradition," *Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, 2, ed. by D. N. Freedman and E. F. Campbell [Garden City: Doubleday, 1964] 283). These same scholars are struck by the absence of destruction at any reasonable period of the conquest and suggest that its capture "was achieved without resort to force of arms" (p. 284), precisely the point of the OT narrator.

retained as booty. But there is no word about the destruction of the material city itself. Presumably it is captured and preserved intact. On the other hand, the Canaanite cities are to be given no opportunity to become subject or client states, but their populations must be placed under  $\text{רָקָה}$ . Again, nothing is said of reducing even Canaanite cities to rubble as normal policy. In fact, the opposite is indicated. A city under siege, whether Canaanite or not, must not suffer even the loss of its fruit trees, for the tree is innocent—it is not a man that it should be destroyed (v 19)!

#### JOSHUA'S STRATEGY OF CONQUEST

The story of the conquest, which makes up the bulk of the book of Joshua, reveals the implementation of this policy first enunciated by Moses. The exceptions, such as Jericho, are always singled out, and their destruction is usually narrated in some detail.<sup>11</sup> These will be considered as a group at a later point.

#### *The southern campaign*

Following the successful division of the land of Canaan in the so-called Central Campaign, Joshua and Israel were confronted by an Amorite coalition of city-states consisting of Jerusalem, Hebron, Yarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. The encounter occurred at Gibeon, six miles northwest of Jerusalem, a city which the Amorites had determined to punish because of its treacherous alliance with Israel (Josh 10:4). As a result of this covenant, Israel was obligated to come to Gibeon's assistance, and so the battle was joined. The result was a smashing victory for Israel, a triumph made possible because "YHWH fought for Israel" in holy war (10:14).<sup>12</sup>

The followup, however, is the significant aspect of the story, for it reveals the attitude that Joshua took toward hostile cities. After

<sup>11</sup>The instructions about Jericho's destruction are very explicit and interesting. Joshua says that it "shall be devoted ( $\text{חָרַם}$ ), it *and everything in it*" with the exception of Rahab (Josh 6:17). The result was that "they burned the *city* with fire *and everything in it*" (v 24). In both statements the destruction of the city is distinguished from the destruction of everything in it because, as we shall see, "city" by itself usually means the population. This is seen also in the case of Ai ("I have given to you the king of Ai, his people, *his city*, and his land" [Josh 8:1; see also 8:8, 19]).

<sup>12</sup>Cities such as Gibeon which, according to the biblical narrative, were spared destruction by Israel may still have been destroyed by others at the same time or at other times. What might then appear to be attributable to Israel should be assigned to some other cause. As for Gibeon itself, no evidence exists of its destruction throughout the LB—Iron II periods (1500-600 B.C.). This is in keeping with the OT narrative which specifies that Joshua spared the city. See J. B. Pritchard, *Gibeon: Where the Sun Stood Still* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1962, 156-61).

briefly returning to camp at Gilgal, Joshua set out for Makkedah, located perhaps between Lachish and Eglon, where he first confined the Amorite kings in a cave (10:18). Next he ran down the enemy soldiers and slaughtered them (10:20). Then he returned to Makkedah and executed the imprisoned kings (10:28).<sup>13</sup> The following steps were undertaken in its capture: (1) Joshua "took" it. The verb used here, **לכד**, is a technical term which describes in a general way the capture of a person or place but which in no way implies destruction. In fact, when destruction is also involved **לכד** is accompanied by a clarifying statement to that effect. For example, Josh 8:21 says, "When Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken (**לכד**) the city [of Ai] and that smoke was going up from the city . . ." (see also vv 8, 19). Likewise, Josh 10:1: "Now Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken (**לכד**) Ai and totally destroyed it (**החרים**). . . ." Most instructive is the account of the fall of Hazor (11:10-13): "At that time Joshua turned back and captured (**לכד**) Hazor and put its king to the sword. . . . Everyone in it they put to the sword. They totally destroyed them (**החרים**), not sparing anything that breathed, and he burned up Hazor itself. Joshua took (**לכד**) all these royal cities and their kings and put them to the sword. He totally destroyed them (**החרים**), as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. Yet Israel did not burn any of the cities built on their mounds—except Hazor, which Joshua burned."

It is clear from these examples that **לכד** by itself does not connote destruction but only capture. Destruction in addition to capture must always be indicated by elaborative statements, frequently containing the verb **חרם**.<sup>14</sup>

(2) Joshua "put to the sword" the city and its king (10:28). That **לכד** does not mean more than capture is seen again in the case of Makkedah, for after the city was taken, it and its king were put to the sword. With reference to Makkedah, the text says literally, "he struck it and its king with the edge of the sword." Here there is no question that "it" (or "the city," NIV) refers to the population since one would not put walls and buildings to the sword.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the meaning

<sup>13</sup>Makkedah, perhaps modern Khirbet el-Kheisun, some 18 miles due west of Bethlehem, has yet to be identified with certainty. It, therefore, is of no help in the conquest problem. See Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (New York: Macmillan, 1968) maps 58, 63, 130; H. G. May, *Oxford Bible Atlas* (London: Oxford University, 1974) 134.

<sup>14</sup>The equivalent Akkadian expression, *ṣabātu āla*, "to take (or conquer) a city" also never denotes destruction when used alone. See CAD, S, 5-41, esp. pp. 15-17. The usual expression for "destroy" is *abātu x*. CAD, A/1, 41-45.

<sup>15</sup>A common meaning of **עיר**, the most frequently occurring Hebrew word for "city," is, in fact, "population." See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, ed., *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden: Brill, 1958) s.v. **עיר**, 701. That the



is amplified by the next clause, "he put them under the ban, every person in it; he left no survivor."<sup>16</sup> The only destruction, according to the narrative, was that of the king and people of Makkedah.

The next object of Joshua's punitive raid is Libnah,<sup>17</sup> just five miles north of Lachish. This time the verb לכד is not used but is replaced by נתן, the converse of לכד. YHWH "gave" the city and its king to Joshua and just as he had done to Makkedah he did to Libnah: he put it and its king to the sword, leaving no survivors. Similarly, Joshua moved on to Lachish<sup>18</sup> which he "took" (לכד) on the second day after YHWH had "given" (נתן) it to him (10:32). He followed up its capture by putting the city and its people to the sword. He then "took" (לכד) Eglon,<sup>19</sup> put it to the sword, and "totally destroyed" (החריס) everyone in it (10:35). Next he "took" (לכד) Hebron<sup>20</sup> and put it to the sword with its king and people. However,

reference to city means "population" is also conclusive in light of the earlier instruction by Joshua about Makkedah and the other cities: "Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has given them to you" (10:19). The second "them" grammatically and syntactically best refers to the cities and not the people.

<sup>16</sup>The phrase is difficult. MT reads הַחֲרִים אֹתָם וְאֶת־כָּל־נַפְשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּהּ לֹא הָשִׁיר שָׂרִיד. Many MSS and some LXX and Targumic readings prefer אֹתָהּ ("it") for MT אֹתָם ("them"), thus requiring the translation, "he put it under the ban and every person in it; he left no survivor." While this may be attractive in some ways, the *lectio difficilior* would retain MT and, as we will show below, the plural pronoun is preferable on other grounds. The waw on אֶת־ could well be a waw explicativum (GKC § 154a note), yielding the meaning, "he put them (the population and king) under the ban; that is, every person in it—he left no survivor."

<sup>17</sup>Libnah now is identified as Tell Bornat, 5 miles NE of Lachish. It appears to have been occupied at the end of LB and beginning of Iron I, but the site has not yet been excavated so nothing can be said about its relationship to the conquest. See R. de Vaux, *The Early History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978) 544.

<sup>18</sup>Lachish, modern Tell ed-Duweir, is about 25 miles SW of Bethlehem. Two Tell el-Amarna letters (nos. 328, 329) were written from Lachish and in a third (no. 333) its king, Zimreda, is accused of collaborating with the Habiru. The site was obviously occupied in the LB early fourteenth century in line with the early conquest date. The only evidence of destruction in LB–Iron Age times is that of 1220 or so B.C., as indicated by an Egyptian inscription found there and dated to the fourth year of either Merneptah or Rameses III. Of course, this destruction is usually attributed to Joshua (Y. Aharoni, *IEJ* 16 [1966] 280–81; 18 [1968] 157–69; 254–55; D. Ussishkin, *BASOR* 223 [1976] 1–13).

<sup>19</sup>Eglon, modern Tell el-Hesi, is about eight miles west of Lachish. It was destroyed at the end of LB and not rebuilt until Solomonic times. See Bimson, *Redating*, 212.

<sup>20</sup>Hebron, of course, retains its biblical name today, though the OT city (now el-Khalil) was somewhat south of the modern site. There is no indication of its destruction throughout the LB period nor, indeed, thereafter until the end of Iron I. However, since the site is currently being excavated nothing definite can be said of the LB one way or the other as yet. See de Vaux, *Early History*, 538.



there is the addendum that at Hebron Israel "totally destroyed" (החרים) both the city and its people (10:37). Finally, the destruction of Debir<sup>21</sup> is recorded in practically identical terms: Joshua "took" (לכד) it, put it and its surrounding villages to the sword, and "totally destroyed" (החרים) the populations (10:39).

There is, admittedly, some ambiguity in the accounts just recited, particularly as far as the "putting to the sword" of the cities is concerned. While it might appear that this favors material destruction, the idiom is clearly inappropriate in that the sword is an instrument used to destroy life and not property. Furthermore, the summary of the Southern Campaign, which doubtless reflects the consistent and comprehensive strategy of Israel under Joshua, leaves no question as to what happened in each case:

"So Joshua subdued (נכה) the whole region. . . . He left no survivors. He totally destroyed (החרים) all who breathed . . ." (10:40). There is not a word here of devastation of walls or buildings—it is only the people who are exterminated.

### *The northern campaign*

It is helpful now to return to the narrative of the Northern Campaign which features the destruction of Hazor<sup>22</sup> and the capture of the neighboring Canaanite towns. We have already pointed out that Joshua "took" (לכד) Hazor and put its king and people to the sword, "completely destroying" (החרים, Hiphil infinitive absolute) them (11:10-11). There is no reference to putting the city to the sword. Instead, the narrator relates that Joshua burned Hazor to the ground. It might be argued, then, that putting a city to the sword is synonymous with destroying it. That this does not necessarily follow is clear from the description of the fate of Hazor's allied cities. Josh 11:12-13 says that "Joshua 'took' (לכד) all these royal cities and their kings and put them *to the sword*. *He totally destroyed them*, as Moses the servant of the LORD has commanded. Yet Israel did not

<sup>21</sup>Debir, identified by Albright as Tell Beit Mirsim, is fifteen miles SW of Hebron and eight SE of Lachish. As Albright showed in his extensive excavations, Debir was fortified in the Hyksos (MB) period, abandoned until the LB period, and totally destroyed at the end of the LB (ca. 1225). Again, the destruction is attributed to the conquest when, in fact, the OT does not indicate conquest destruction, a fact borne out by a mid-LB conquest. See Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960) 108-9. Miller ("Archaeology," 87) rejects Albright's identification of Debir and suggests instead Khirbet Rabûd, with M. Kochavi (*Tel Aviv* 1 [1974] 2-33). He says that Khirbet Rabûd was occupied throughout LB-Iron I but evinces no major destruction at that time. This later identification, no doubt the correct one, confirms the thesis that Debir was "taken" but not destroyed.

<sup>22</sup>The archaeological evidence for Hazor is presented below, p. 120.

burn any of the cities built on their mounds—except Hazor, which Joshua burned.” In other words, Joshua put all these cities to the sword and yet did not burn them. This beyond question proves that to put to the sword refers not to the physical cities but to their populations. Unless there is evidence to the contrary (and there is not), the same idiom means the same thing wherever it is found.

The summation of the total conquest is also illuminating. The historian recounts that “Joshua ‘took’ (לָכַד) this entire land: the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah and the mountains of Israel with their foothills. . . . He ‘captured’ (לָכַד) all their kings and struck them down, putting them to death” (Josh 11:16-17). Not a word is said of material destruction.<sup>23</sup>

#### ALLOCATION OF THE CITIES

Joshua’s account of the distribution of the cities to the tribes and to individuals is also instructive, especially those which are specifically mentioned as having been taken, put to the sword, or completely destroyed in the conquest. The first example is Hebron. Because of Caleb’s faithful report to Moses when he returned from spying out the land, Moses had promised him a personal inheritance (Num 14:24). In fulfillment of this pledge Joshua assigned to Caleb the city of Hebron (Josh 14:13). Though one cannot prove, perhaps, that Hebron was not a pile of rubble,<sup>24</sup> it would appear that it must have been physically intact in order to have been a meaningful gift to Caleb. Moreover, in order to actually possess the city Caleb had to evict from it the three sons of Anak (15:14; Judg 1:10), an unnecessary task if the city was not standing.<sup>25</sup> It is apparent that the earlier population of Hebron had been destroyed and that the Anakim

<sup>23</sup>A possible exception might be seen in the latter part of the summary (11:21-23) where it is said that Joshua totally destroyed the Anakim “with their cities” (עַם עֲרִיקָם), having first cut them off from Hebron, Debir, Anab, and other places. There is no indication from the passage, however, that the cities named are identical to the cities of the Anakim which were destroyed. Proof of this is the fact that the Anakim reoccupied Hebron and Debir, at least, and after Joshua’s death had to be driven out of these cities once again by Caleb (Judg 1:20; cf. Josh 15:13-15; Judg 1:10). Marten Woudstra, (*The Book of Joshua* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981] 193, n. 28) agrees that the burning of Hazor was an exception not only in the north but throughout the conquest.

<sup>24</sup>For archaeological evidence to the contrary, see above, n. 19.

<sup>25</sup>The relationship of the Joshua and Judges narratives concerning the granting of Hebron to Caleb is admittedly somewhat complex. Josh 14:13-15 states only that Hebron was assigned to Caleb. There is no suggestion that he took it immediately. Josh 15:13-19 recounts the actual seizure of the city by Caleb and his dispossession of the Anakim. Since the Anakim had already been driven out by Joshua in the original

had simply moved back in to take its place. Evidently the same thing was true of Debir, for though the city had been taken by Joshua earlier, it was necessary for Caleb to retake it, thus presupposing its continued material existence and repopulation (Josh 15:15-17).

On the other hand, it is true that all the cities which we know to have been physically destroyed—Jericho, Ai, and Hazor<sup>26</sup>—were, with the exception of Ai, assigned to the tribes as part of their allotments (Josh 18:21; 19:36). But there is no indication that they were inhabited immediately after their destruction nor, indeed, for some time later. In short, Jericho, Ai, and Hazor, the three cities which were reduced to rubble, are not said to have been repopulated soon thereafter.<sup>27</sup> Of the others where there is narrative evidence—Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir—the latter two were almost immediately repopulated, either by the indigenous populations or Israelites.<sup>28</sup> And since the account of their capture is exactly the same as that of the others ("They did to Debir and its king as they had done to Libnah and its king and to Hebron," Josh 10:39; cf. 10:32, 35, 37), it may be assumed that these others too were left standing and habitable.

conquest (10:36-37; 11:21), Caleb's action must represent a second dispossession. Judg 1:9-10, 20, is a summary of the Caleb conquest, an event which clearly followed the death of Joshua (Judg 1:1). See C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.) 156-57. For the standard critical view that the account in Judges 1 is a rival and contradictory description of the conquest from that given in Joshua, see G. F. Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923) 8-10.

<sup>26</sup>Jerusalem also was burned but only after Joshua's death (Judg 1:8) and apparently only partially or with little damage since the Jebusites reoccupied it and were not dislodged until the time of David (Judg 1:21; cf. 2 Sam 5:6-10). Since Jerusalem has not been thoroughly excavated it is impossible to know much if anything of the destruction level implied by the Judges 1 narrative.

<sup>27</sup>See below, pp. 119-20, for the archaeological evidence.

<sup>28</sup>It is difficult to say how long it was after the initial conquest of Hebron and Debir before the cities were repopulated by Caleb and his family. The first conquest lasted seven years, between 1406-1399, as is clear from the fact that Caleb was 40 years old some 38 years before the conquest began and was 85 when it ended and he made his request for an inheritance (Josh 14:7, 10, 13). Joshua did not die before ca. 1375 B.C. so Caleb's possession of Hebron must have been no earlier than 25 years after the Joshua conquest. This would require Caleb to be 110 years of age at the time but since Joshua lived to be 110 (Josh 24:29) and Moses 120 (Deut 34:7) there is nothing inherently improbable in Caleb's living to 115 or more. See E. H. Merrill, "Paul's Use of 'About 450 Years' in Acts 13:20," *BSac* 138 (1981) 250, 256 n. 18. This period of 25 years between conquests is sufficient to explain the repopulation of these (and other) cities by the native elements. But since there is no archaeological evidence of their rebuilding they must not have been destroyed previously.

## REVIEW OF JOSHUA'S STRATEGY

The policy of Moses, as we have seen, was to leave the city structures intact to the extent that the walls, buildings, cisterns, and even orchards and vineyards should be preserved (Deut 6:10-11; 19:1). It remains now to see how successfully this policy was carried out by Joshua in the actual conquest of Canaan. We have already argued that where narrative detail is supplied the only cities which suffered structural devastation were Jericho, Ai, and Hazor. All the others were left standing, though their populations were frequently decimated. The most persuasive proof that Moses' strategy was followed, however, is that of Joshua's own testimony in the covenant context of Joshua 24. As most scholars now recognize, this chapter is largely a statement of covenant renewal with most of the essential elements of a standard covenant document. This includes the so-called "historical prologue," found in this instance in 24:2-13.<sup>29</sup>

After rehearsing the remotely past dealings of YHWH from the election of the fathers "beyond the river" through the Egyptian sojourn and exodus-Sinai redemptive event, Joshua recites the immediately past history of which he was a part and an eye-witness. He points out that all enemies on both sides of the Jordan had been defeated by YHWH the warrior. Then, climactically, the LORD says, "I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant" (Josh 24:13).

It might be objected, of course, that Joshua made this proclamation long after the conquest proper, in plenty of time for the Israelites to have built their own cities on the ruins of Canaanite sites. But this cannot be the case since Joshua emphasizes that the Israelites are living in cities which *they did not build*. One can only assume either that Joshua was mistaken or that indeed he had faithfully pursued the policy dictated by Moses that the conquest and occupation of Canaan should not require the leveling of the cities themselves.

## EXCEPTIONS TO THE POLICY

The implication of all this should be most apparent. Scholars, whether conservative or liberal, who seek to establish the date of the conquest on the basis of evidence of destruction of Canaanite sites are missing the point entirely, for if the biblical account is correct, there is no such evidence. The exceptions, of course, are Jericho, Ai, and Hazor. To each of these we must now briefly address ourselves to see what if any information can be gained relevant to our problem.

<sup>29</sup>For a good analysis, see K. A. Kitchen, *The Bible in Its World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1977) 79-85.

*Ai*

It is possible to dismiss Ai from consideration almost out of hand because so complex are the questions relative even to its location that it can scarcely be used to resolve our thesis one way or the other.<sup>30</sup> Though traditionally identified with Khirbet et-Tell, there is increasing skepticism that the identification is correct. Even if it is, it is not helpful to either the traditional or a late conquest date since it apparently was desolate from the end of the Early Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. That is, from about 2000 B.C. to about 1100 it was unoccupied, and so it cannot be identified with Ai whether the conquest be 1400 B.C. or 1250 or so. Until Ai can be firmly identified with a modern site, it can be of no use in dating the conquest.

*Jericho*

Unfortunately, the situation with Jericho is not much better, for though there is no question about the location of the OT city, it has suffered such ravages at the hands of both the elements and the excavators that its testimony is at best ambivalent. The first systematic investigations of the mound (Tell es-Sultan) by John Garstang led him to the view that City D was destroyed by a violent conflagration shortly after 1400 B.C. This he associated with the Israelite conquest under Joshua, thus supporting the traditional date.<sup>31</sup> Kathleen Kenyon, whose work was even more extensive, rejected Garstang's conclusion about City D and finally settled on a date of 1300 B.C. or a little later.<sup>32</sup> It is readily apparent that her position supports neither side of the question, for it is 100 years too late for the one and 50 years too early for the other.

How, then, should one view Kenyon's point that there is no sign at Jericho of an early fourteenth century destruction? Bimson in his recent monograph on the problem suggests that the reason no evidence of a Late Bronze destruction exists is that Joshua destroyed not a Late Bronze but a Middle Bronze city. Though it has been

<sup>30</sup>In reference to what he calls "the problem city of Ai," Bimson (*Redating*, 215-25) reviews the entire controversy surrounding the identification of Ai. Though essentially favoring D. Livingston's position ("The Location of Biblical Bethel and Ai Reconsidered," *WThJ* 33 [1970] 20-24; "Traditional Site of Bethel Questioned," *WThJ* 34 [1971] 39-50) that Bethel should not be identified with Beitin but Bireh and thus that et-Tell is not Ai (so that Ai is as yet still unknown), Bimson nonetheless argues that both et-Tell and Beitin are ambiguous since both were unoccupied at the period of either usual date for the conquest.

<sup>31</sup>John Garstang, *The Story of Jericho* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1948) 126-30.

<sup>32</sup>Kathleen Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (New York: Praeger, 1964) 211; "Palestine in the Time of the Eighteenth Dynasty," *CAH*<sup>3</sup> 2/1, 545.

customary to date the end of the MB settlement at ca. 1550 B.C., Bimson, in an exhaustive treatment of all the data, prefers a date within a decade or so of 1430 B.C.<sup>33</sup> This means that he is within about 25 years of the traditional date, and whether one calls the city MB or LB is almost irrelevant, since such terms are not used in the OT anyway. Clearly, it is impossible to establish dates of archaeological strata with such precision as to argue for 1430 against 1406, especially in the absence of *in situ* datable inscriptions. In conclusion, there is nothing from Jericho to militate against a 1400 B.C. conquest date and much to commend it.

### Hazor

Finally, the more scientifically and objectively researched mound of Tell Hazor must be considered. The chief excavator of the most recent dig, Yigael Yadin, has presented evidence of a major destruction of the city by fire, a destruction he dates from 1250-1200 and assigns to Joshua and the Israelites.<sup>34</sup> This, he says, offers proof of the late conquest date. However, he also refers to the overthrow of the MB IIC city at about 1400 B.C., a date he later changed to 1550 because of his revised dating of the later LB I level. This revision was itself dependent on the discovery of bichrome ware in Stratum 2 (LB I), a fact which Yadin felt required the adjustment of the dating of the stratum upward and, with it, a correspondingly earlier date for MB IIC.<sup>35</sup> Bimson has shown that the whole realignment is unnecessary since the basis of dating bichrome ware is itself erroneous.<sup>36</sup> A 1400 B.C. date for the conflagration of MB IIC Hazor can, then, be maintained and with it the early date of the conquest on the assumption that the devastation was at Israelite hands.

### CONCLUSION

There are, then, only three cities in Canaan itself which are explicitly singled out as having been physically destroyed by Joshua

<sup>33</sup>Bimson, *Redating*, 144. For a fair review of Bimson's approach by a critical scholar, see J. Maxwell Miller, *JBL* 99 (1980) 133, 135. Miller points out that Bimson has shown that "those who hold to a thirteenth century exodus-conquest have no monopoly on the archaeological evidence."

<sup>34</sup>See conveniently Y. Yadin, "The Rise and Fall of Hazor," *Archaeological Discoveries in the Holy Land* (New York: Bonanza, 1967) 62-63; "Excavations at Hazor, 1955-1958," *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, vol. 2, ed. by David Noel Freedman and Edward F. Campbell, Jr. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964) 224.

<sup>35</sup>Y. Yadin, "The Fifth Season of Excavations at Hazor, 1968-1969," *BA* 32 (1969) 55.

<sup>36</sup>Bimson, *Redating*, 147-83.



and the Israelites in their conquest of the land—Jericho, Ai, and Hazor—and even these cannot now be confidently identified or dated unambiguously. This means that the prodigious labors and ingenious solutions which have been expended on the host of remaining cities listed in connection with the conquest are irrelevant. If, as we have attempted to show, the policy of Israel as initiated by Moses and carried out by Joshua was indeed implemented, one should not expect to find evidence of destruction of Canaanite cities at Israelite hands in the period 1406-1385. To the contrary, if such evidence were forthcoming it would, as we have suggested earlier, prove extremely embarrassing to the biblical narrative itself. Critical scholars may or may not be influenced by the exegetical arguments adduced in this paper since their redaction-criticism and other approaches can in any event explain away the biblical witness. The conservative, however, must reexamine the procedure that would try to defend the early date of the conquest by positing a 1400 B.C. devastation of Canaanite sites on archaeological grounds. When he does this he disregards the intent of the biblical narratives and thus subjects the historicity of this part of the OT at least to painful wounds in the house of its own friends.

Do tells tell tales? Most assuredly they do, when interpreted correctly. But the OT also speaks, and in regard to the question of the date of the conquest it eloquently states that there is no conflict between text and tell when both are viewed dispassionately and objectively.



## REVIEW ARTICLE

### *Earth's Pre-Flood Vapor Canopy*

John C. Whitcomb and Donald B. DeYoung

*The Waters Above: Earth's Pre-Flood Vapor Canopy*, by Joseph C. Dillow. Chicago: Moody, 1981. Pp. 479. \$12.95.

Christian scholarship owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to Joseph C. Dillow and to Moody Press for this magnificent analysis of the biblical and scientific evidence for the vast vapor canopy of water that existed above the atmosphere from Creation to the Flood. Nothing remotely comparable to this work is known to the reviewers. It is definitely a landmark, a significant step forward, and an encouraging sign of the health and vigor of the modern creationist/catastrophist movement within evangelical Christianity. The 32-page bibliography, including numerous personal communications with leading authorities, provides a clue to the enormous amount of research that has been invested in this study.

With both science and theology in his academic background (B.S., University of Oregon; Th.D., Dallas Theological Seminary), Dillow has served as a visiting professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and now works in Vienna, Austria, with a missionary society, Inherit a Blessing, Inc.

Joseph Dillow's basic thesis is that God enveloped the pre-Flood earth "in a thermal vapor blanket capable of precipitating many feet of water which condensed in the recent geological past in 40 days due to volcanic eruption, resulting in a geographically universal flood" (p. 136). Six key points in his model are: (1) The celestial ocean of Gen 1:6-7 turned to vapor by the fourth creative day due to lower pressure and higher temperature; (2) About 40 feet of water, causing 1.14 additional atmospheres of pressure, fell at the average rate of one-half inch per hour for 40 days at the beginning of the Flood year; (3) The days of creation were literal and there were no gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 10-11, thus dating the Flood to about 2500 B.C.; (4) The condensation of the vapor canopy during the Flood caused atmospheric pressure to drop suddenly to its present level; (5) This condensation was apparently caused by volcanic ash hurled into the atmosphere; (6) The massive amounts of rain produced a geographically universal deluge (pp. 137-38).

In the light of this model, Dillow next proceeds to offer ten predictions concerning the geophysics of the ancient earth: (1) a greenhouse effect; (2) a more rapid formation of  $^3\text{He}$  (an isotope of helium) from tritium (a heavy

isotope of hydrogen); (3) a greater atmospheric pressure; (4) shielding from cosmic radiation; (5) a global flood; (6) volcanic ash mixed with glacial ice at the time of the flood; (7) a sudden and permanent temperature drop in the polar regions; (8) fewer meteorites in pre-Flood strata; (9) residual amounts of water in the stratosphere today; (10) a changed appearance of the heavenly bodies after the Flood (pp. 138-39, with elaboration through p. 191).

This is followed by refutations of alternative canopy models (liquid, ice, and cloud) in Chapter 6; a somewhat technical discussion of pre-Flood atmospheric conditions under a decaying canopy in Chapter 7; suggested answers to major problems with the vapor canopy theory (the precipitation of the canopy, the head load, oxygen toxicity and nitrogen narcosis, climate under the canopy, the dynamics of the canopy, and infrared cooling) in Chapter 8; and then a fascinating chapter on the number of stars visible to mankind before the Flood (about 255 maximum at one time) and after the collapse of the vapor canopy (an additional 2245), with implications for the great outburst of sun, moon, and star worship during the early post-Flood period.

For the average reader, Dillow's most fascinating chapters will doubtless be 10: "The Riddle of the Frozen Giants," 11: "The Laughter of the Gods," and 12: "The Catastrophic Freeze." In a highly readable fashion and in amazing detail, our author carries us step by step through the controversies that have surrounded the discovery of frozen mammoths and other animals in the great tundras of Siberia, Alaska, and the islands of the Arctic Ocean. Similar in size to, or somewhat larger than, the Indian elephant, mammoths lacked the oil-producing glands in their skin that would have enabled them to live in cold climates (pp. 339-40). The presence of a 3½ inch layer of fat indicates a large food supply (no longer available in those regions) and not protection from cold (p. 337). Even the possession of a wooly coat was no more the mark of an arctic animal than is the thick fur of a tropical tiger (p. 338), especially when it is seen that their skin lacked the erector muscles characteristic of all Arctic mammals known today (p. 342).

Dillow provides overwhelming evidence that the climate in those northern regions was once warm. "Baron Toll, the Arctic explorer, found remains of a saber-toothed tiger and a 90-foot plum tree with green leaves and ripe fruit on its branches over 600 miles north of the Arctic Circle in the New Siberian Islands. Today the only vegetation that grows there is a one-inch-high willow" (p. 346). "Dr. Jack A. Wolfe in a recent *U.S. Geological Survey Report* told that Alaska once teemed with tropical plants. He found evidence of mangroves, palm trees, Burmese laquer trees, and groups of trees that now produce nutmeg and Macassar oil" (p. 348).

After a careful analysis of the stomach contents of the Beresovka mammoth, discovered by Russian scientists in 1901, our author concludes: "The mammoth must have been overwhelmed suddenly with a rapid deep freeze and instant death. The sudden death is proved by the unchewed bean pods still containing the beans that were found between its teeth, and the deep freeze is suggested by the well-preserved state of the stomach contents and the presence of edible meat" (p. 377). "The animal was peacefully grazing in late

July, and suddenly within a half hour of ingestion of his last lunch he was overcome by temperatures colder than  $-150^{\circ}\text{F}$ , and froze to death in the middle of the summer. Furthermore, he never completely thawed until he fell out of a riverbank in 1901" (p. 396).

How many mammoths are still buried in the frozen muck of Siberia? First of all, the burial grounds are analyzed. In some areas of that 4,000-mile-wide continent, Russian scientists "have drilled down 4,000 feet and still did not reach solid rock" (p. 351). The permafrost (permanently frozen muck) reached to a depth of over 1,000 feet (p. 352), and "when this frozen soil melts, it results in an appalling, and often stinking, sort of soup composed of goo with silt, sand, pebbles, and boulders, often with masses of preserved, semidecayed or fully decayed vegetable and animal matter" (p. 351). "The very odor of the tundra in the New Siberian Islands has suggested to many that the soil must be full of rotten meat, yet 99% of these remains have never been 'seen' by human eyes" (p. 330). During the brief summer thaw, vast swarms of insects are attracted to these regions (p. 401).

Second, the extreme difficulty of excavating complete mammoths is explained. Very few people live in those areas (p. 331), and because of bad experiences with Russian authorities, they hesitate to report significant finds (p. 333), or the delay in receiving the reports is such that the exposed carcass is torn to bits by wolves and foxes before scientists can reach it during the two brief months of summer thaw (pp. 332, 349). "The expedition organized to excavate the Beresovka mammoth in 1901 traveled a thousand miles on sleds and horses," but travel was almost impossible because of the melting mud (p. 333).

In spite of such obstacles, 39 frozen specimens had been examined by 1960 (p. 329), and nearly 50,000 mammoth tusks had been collected and sold to the ivory trade (p. 355; cf. pp. 331f., 404). "The total mammoth population is obviously thousands of times larger than the number of tusks men have counted in the past 200 years. *The tusks indicate herds of millions of mammoths*" (p. 329, n. 82; italics added). Dillow pointedly comments: "If we were to jump into an acre of hay and regularly find needles, we would normally conclude that there must be millions of needles in the haystack in order for any one of them to have a probability of being found" (p. 318; cf. p. 331).

Various uniformitarian theories of the freezing of the mammoths are refuted (pp. 355-64) and impressive evidence is provided concerning the conditions necessary to freeze the stomach contents of an animal with a four-inch-thick stomach wall (pp. 383-400). The conclusion is reached that "there is no problem in preserving at least some of the mammoth remains in a relatively fresh state throughout the year of the Flood, securely preserved, fresh frozen under tons of tundra muck, which subsequently froze into today's permafrost" (p. 418).

Dillow helpfully suggests that dinosaurs (reptiles) and mammoths (mammals) were not buried together because they lived in different parts of the world. Nevertheless, "like the mammoths, they were overwhelmed with a sudden and global flood. The representatives of the dinosaurs that Noah

presumably took with him on the ark were simply not able to survive in the changed post-Flood climate with its cooler temperatures and severe winters" (p. 420).

Even if nothing else had been published except these 110 pages of material in chapters 10-12, it would have been worth the entire price of the book. In fact, since nearly one-fourth of the book is devoted to this fascinating topic, with key quotations from early explorers, the volume might well have been subtitled to reflect this emphasis. An added attraction is eight photographs of several frozen mammoths or close-ups of parts of them.

From a theological perspective, the book is impressive because a serious attempt is made to deal with biblical exegesis *before* scientific problems are confronted. "One of the strong points of *The Genesis Flood* is the authors' attempt to lay out a careful exegetical foundation before beginning to make scientific conclusions. The same practice will be followed in this book. Before the science of such a canopy can be considered, it must first be established from the Bible exegetically that such a canopy existed" (p. xviii).

True to his promise, Dillow provides a 40-page introductory chapter of the relationship between biblical exegesis and scientific theory. Here the concept of the Bible as a 'textbook of science' is explored (pp. 2-7), the critical view of Genesis 1 as a reflection of ancient Near Eastern mythology is answered (pp. 7-11), the nature of scriptural language explained (pp. 11-12), and the possibilities of extracting scientific truth from Genesis is set forth in terms of six basic hermeneutical principles (pp. 12-41). Dillow resists the tendency to read modern technical scientific ideas into Genesis, but nevertheless finds *significant* scientific truths in those early chapters. "The area of significance, cautiously applied, and with the assumption that present-day laws of nature applied then, can give us a 'scientific textbook' look at the world that used to be" (p. 37).

Following this are two chapters (pp. 43-111) of careful exegesis of "Biblical Evidence for the Water Heaven Theory." Among the concepts considered here are "the firmament" (pp. 43-48), "the waters above the expanse" (pp. 48-65), the amount of rain in the Flood (pp. 65-75), "no rain, but a mist" (pp. 77-93), the absence of rainbows before the Flood (pp. 93-98), the lack of seasons before the Flood (pp. 98-101), the expression "very good" (pp. 101-2), ancient longevity (p. 102), and the cause of Noah's drunkenness (pp. 102-8).

Our author then provides a brief chapter (pp. 113-34) on "The Canopy in World Mythology," with special focus on Babylon, Egypt, Greece, India, Persia, Polynesia, and Sumer. He concludes: "The parallels to the Genesis record of a water heaven are frequent, interesting, and precise. . . . If there were a water heaven that condensed and resulted in a global deluge, we would expect to find a universal flood and water heaven traditions—and this is exactly what we do find. This tends to supply circumstantial evidence for a universal flood" (p. 129).

In addition to the areas of strength already noted, the reviewers feel that certain propositions offered by Dillow should be highlighted for those involved in the current renaissance of biblical creationism/catastrophism.



First of all, quoting favorably E. H. Colbert's assertion that in the ancient world "the land was low and there were no high mountains forming physical or climactic barriers" (p. 141), our author proceeds with the remarkable implications of this fact in terms of the lack of convection updrafts that could have disturbed the canopy (p. 246). This is properly connected with Ps 104: 6-9 (cf. also p. 419).

Another highly significant contribution is the discussion of the "aerodynamics of the pteranodon" (pp. 147-52). This flying reptile had a wingspan of up to 53 feet! Thus, it must have had greater muscular power and efficiency than birds do today, including a capability of delivering nearly 100 watts, and benefitted from "the additional aid that increased oxygen tension would make in supplying energy to the muscles under the greater atmospheric pressure during the reign of the water heaven" (p. 151). "We assume that when Noah took two of every kind on the ark, pteranodons were among the animals preserved." But increased post-Flood wind velocities and "lower atmospheric pressure resulted in a reduced lift coefficient and an inability to fly" (p. 152).

The book contains numerous examples of such brilliant reasoning, though at times the mathematical quantifications are intimidating to all but a very small number of readers! Even Henry M. Morris, leading hydraulic engineer and author of the Foreword to the book, concurs that "in many sections the book will be difficult to follow, even for those with training in science and mathematics" (p. xv). But he quickly adds that "it is vital that these sections be included for those who may want to check their validity."

The present reviewers cannot avoid the question, however, whether much of the highly technical material should be relegated to footnotes or even end notes. It is feared that the tremendous value of Dillow's research may be hidden from the eyes of most people by the sheer mass of formulas and technical charts. Perhaps a condensed and popularized version is now in order!

Additional very helpful material may be found in Dillow's discussion of "the waters above the firmament" (heaven, expanse) in Genesis 1 (pp. 25-26) and in Ps 148:4 (pp. 104-8); the growth pattern of reptiles, including dinosaurs (pp. 156-57); man's unique ability to accumulate knowledge from one generation to another (p. 181); possible environmental factors in pre-Flood longevity (cf. subject index: "longevity"); and the metaphysics of uniformity (pp. 327, 335, 341). It is also refreshing to see a forthright rejection of the "exegetically improbable gap-theory interpretation" of Genesis 1:1-2, with a footnote reference to "Weston Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled*, pp. 1-146, for a thorough refutation of the gap theory" (p. 197).

In a volume of this size, encompassing numerous and highly controversial issues, it is not to be expected that even creationist reviewers would endorse every statement. The following areas of weakness, both theological and scientific, are sufficiently serious to be mentioned in a review.

Is it theologically correct to say that Moses accepted the pagan notion of an ancient liquid ocean above the atmosphere (pp. 22, 40)? Would it not be more accurate to say that God revealed to him the truth on this matter, which

the pagan world had largely distorted through oral tradition? In like manner, the Flood was not a concept which Moses simply accepted or selected from a spectrum of false ideas in pagan mythology.

Why did Noah become drunk with wine immediately after the Flood when he was a righteous man who walked with God (Gen 6:9; 7:1; 9:20-27)? Dillow suggests that "Noah was simply caught off guard" and "could have unintentionally gotten drunk" because of the sudden change of fermentation rates at the time of the collapse of the vapor canopy (p. 103). He assumes that greater atmospheric pressure before the Flood (2.18 times present) functioned as a "lid" which prevented CO<sub>2</sub> production and therefore slowed reactions (glucose → ethyl alcohol + 2CO<sub>2</sub>) so much that grape juice never fermented! But this idea is suspect for two reasons. First, increased atmospheric pressure would have little effect on the fermentation reaction (Le Chatelier's Principle). Second, there is no evidence in Scripture that Noah was not fully cognizant of what he was doing when he made and drank the wine. Note the deliberate actions: "Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself in this tent" (Gen 9:20-21). Even a "righteous man" in Scripture is capable of sin (cf. Gen 20:9-13; 1 John 1:8-10), and thus an important commodity preserved in Noah's Ark was fallen human nature.

Dillow dates the Flood at 2346 B.C. by taking the view that Genesis 10 is a strict chronology (pp. 137, 161-64), without gaps, based upon a doctoral dissertation by H. David Clark. But he seems willing to abandon this view should the scientific evidence so demand! "Should such conclusive evidence be forthcoming that the Flood simply cannot be dated on archaeological grounds at 2500 B.C., then, and only then, would the strict interpretation need to be abandoned. In that event the gap view of the genealogies gives the creationist scientist some breathing room to expand the date of the Flood back several thousand years and out of the range of serious conflict with archaeology" (p. 164).

This is a weak position from an exegetical and apologetical standpoint. Either the text does or does not allow gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11. Archaeology, however helpful in many areas of biblical studies, can never supplant the clear teaching of Scripture. A far better solution would be to acknowledge that the Hebrew word translated "begat" really means "became the father *or* ancestor" of the next named person, the exact relationship being determined by the immediate or general context. A close study of Genesis 11 does indicate that the Flood probably occurred several centuries before Abraham (cf. Whitcomb and Morris, *The Genesis Flood*, pp. 474-89).

A much less important problem is our author's use of Ps 18:7-15 as a reference to the Flood (p. 138). While not totally impossible, such a reference is conceded to be "debatable," and should therefore be dropped. There is really no lack of Biblical material on the Deluge, so questionable proof texts do not help the argument.

On the fascinating question of dinosaurs and the Flood, Dillow suggests: "Presumably, Noah would have taken newly born dinosaurs on the ark" (p. 155). But in view of the fact that "reptiles continue to grow until death"

(p. 156), it might be more realistic to say: "much younger and therefore much smaller dinosaurs."

The reviewers would suggest that the following sentence be dropped from the text: "The extinction of one plant that was the sole source for that co-enzyme [Vitamin E or C], that is, the fruit of the tree of life, perhaps—(Gen 3:24) would be sufficient to alter man's biochemistry and decrease his longevity" (p. 175). The biblical record does not indicate that Adam (or any of his descendants) ate of the tree of life.

Another overstatement is that "prior to the Flood, men apparently were vegetarians" (p. 180). True, God did not officially permit men to eat flesh until after the Flood (Gen 9:3), but since they had been ignoring all of his commandments anyway (cf. Gen 6:5), it is highly unlikely that they would have obeyed this one.

Gen 49:25 ("blessings of the deep that lies beneath") can hardly refer to "subterranean water" (p. 282). Rather, it refers to *oceanic waters* below the shoreline as explained by Moses himself (Deut 4:18—"any fish that is in the water below the earth").

Theologically, one would expect to find a little more emphasis on the supernatural causes of the Flood, for this seems to be given the greater emphasis in the biblical text, though secondary causes and mechanisms are by no means omitted ("all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened," etc.). The major purpose of the book, of course, is to explore some of the physical means God might have chosen to use to accomplish his divine judgment upon mankind at the Deluge, and the atmospheric conditions that may have preceded it. Nevertheless, in his attempt to explain *all* of these secondary causes, Dillow sometimes leaves his readers with only a partial view of Deluge dynamics: "The storms of the pre-Flood period . . . unleashed a growing flood." "Due to continental shifts and the spewing forth of subterranean waters, the entire earth was covered with water" (p. 417). By contrast, note the perspective in Ps 29:10—"The Lord sat as King at the Flood; yes, the Lord sits as King forever."

Again, in the highly relevant question of what caused the collapse of the great vapor canopy, would it not have been theologically reassuring to mention God at least once (pp. 267-68)? If God miraculously lifted the canopy in the first place (pp. 56-57), was he limited to secondary causes to bring it back down again? Thus, the following line of reasoning leaves one with a sense of uneasiness: "When several thousand of these volcanoes began to erupt all over the earth, the atmosphere would become severely disrupted, cooling would result, and rapid dispersal of these nuclei through the canopy might be possible. It would appear, then, that perhaps a year of pre-Flood atmospheric instability probably built up due to these eruptions, and these local instabilities precipitated into a global instability on the day of the Deluge" (p. 268).

Much emphasis is given throughout the book to the supposed change of the water canopy from a liquid to a vapor phase (pp. 50-51, 55-62, 103, 111, 137, 421). The exegetical evidence for an original liquid state seems impressive, and also the scientific evidence for a later vapor phase. However, there seems to be some confusion as to when and how this happened. On the one

hand, it is suggested that the change occurred during creation week and was therefore miraculous (p. 57). On the other hand, we are told that "this ocean turned to vapor by the fourth creative day due to lower pressure and higher temperatures. We admit that the text does not explicitly say this. . ." (p. 137). The reviewers would suggest, therefore, that both the exact time and means of this change be left to the realm of "secret things" (Deut 29:29), if, indeed, there was a change at all. It seems somewhat hazardous to postulate the mechanisms God might have employed in the accomplishing of his original creative acts (cf. Heb 11:3).

Could this constant appeal to purely physical causes be attributed, at least in part, to an inadequate concept of Christian apologetics? Our author is certainly correct in saying that "the word *faith* simply means 'trust.'" But then he explains: "As presented in the Bible it is the rational decision of the will based on sufficient historical evidence" (p. 425). But what part does the Spirit of God have in all of this? Does man, in his spiritual depravity, "trust" in God when "sufficient historical evidence" is presented to him? If this be so, why did our Lord warn us that "if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31)? Dillow modestly concedes that "the validity of the Bible's claim to be the revelation from God has not been established by the discussion in this book," but, he adds, "it is certainly confirmed by them" (p. 423). The reviewers feel that the sacred text stands entirely on its own authority, though it is true that certain historical or scientific statements in Scripture may be illumined or better understood (though not necessarily *believed*) because of human investigation.

However, the most serious theological problem in the book is the frequent reference to a "pre-creation chaos" which God supposedly overcame in bringing order into the universe during the creation week (pp. 21-23, 61, 64-65, 83, 99-101, 107, 119-23). This view has been expressed by one of his former instructors, Bruce K. Waltke ("The Creation Account in Genesis 1: 1-3," *BSac* 132 [1975] 25-36, and two subsequent issues).

The "pre-creation chaos" theory assumes that the earth existed long before the present universe was created, probably rendered chaotic by the fall of Satan. Thus, we are told, the direct creation of the earth is not even mentioned in the creation account. The view abounds with exegetical and theological difficulties, building upon supposed parallels between Genesis 1 and Babylonian mythology (cf. preliminary interaction with Waltke's views in Weston W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1978], 127, and an unpublished critique dated November 13, 1978). Thus, the view is not only inadequately supported but is essentially irrelevant to Dillow's thesis. Actually, Gen 1:2 does not describe a "chaos" at all (cf. John Whitcomb, *The Early Earth* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972], 115-34), but rather a perfect earth that was incomplete as a home for man at that stage of creation events.

Several scientific questions may be mentioned at this point. First, Dillow's brief explanation of the "Greenhouse Effect" (pp. 139-45) needs to be expanded with a figure and calculations, since it is important to his model.

More should be said about the Venus vapor canopy. A photograph is shown (though Venus is not listed in the index), but the 200 mph winds of Venus appear to contradict Dillow's ideas of a very stable and stagnant atmosphere.

Second, Dillow is incomplete in calling cosmic rays "streams of positively charged hydrogen nuclei" (p. 165). Cosmic rays also include helium nuclei and heavy ions.

Third, Dillow's canopy model will spontaneously decay, even without collapsing. Although the timescale is large (p. 263), the canopy is *temporary* from its creation, thus assuming decay (increasing entropy) even prior to the fall of man. The fundamental problem of *decay* prior to *sin* should be confronted more solidly than by a mere comparison with the sun's assumed decay process from the moment of its creation.

Fourth, Dillow's canopy model faces the same heating problem of all such models. A collapsing vapor canopy would raise the atmospheric temperature to a scorching 1623°C (p. 269)! To avoid this, he hypothesizes a year of pre-Flood volcanic activity on a large scale (30-40 simultaneous volcanoes, pp. 273, 277, or even "several thousands," p. 268). His motive is to spread the time out for vapor condensation, so that the heat could slowly escape the earth by thermal radiation. The multiple, violent, pre-Flood volcanoes somehow seem to be an *artificial* requirement. The reviewers are not saying that they disagree with the canopy model (they do agree!); but atmospheric heating still remains a *basic* problem.

Fifth, Dillow does not mention the *tidal* effects on a vapor canopy. Certainly they would be significant on such an air mass, possibly leading to instabilities.

Sixth, one wonders also about the interaction between a vapor canopy and a strong magnetic field, which both existed together. Such a magnetic field would especially perturb the upper ionized canopy layer, leading to intense radiation belts and aurora.

Seventh, the suggestion is made that  $C^{14}$  implantation in man after the Flood was the cause of decreased life span (p. 166). This appears unreasonable because  $C^{14}$  is a very rare isotope. Today, after considerable  $C^{14}$  buildup, the ratio of  $C^{14}$  to  $C^{12}$  is still only one part to a trillion.

Eighth, the "massive temperature inversion" (p. 240) predicted for the pre-Flood world by Dillow could have led to catastrophic air pollution problems, just as inversions do today.

Ninth, Dillow states that "instead of a canopy Udd conceives of a thin 'plate' in the plane of the equator like Saturn's rings" (p. 194). This is a misrepresentation of Udd's position. The misunderstanding is doubtless based upon the unfortunate use of the phrase "spherical plane" from the thesis by Udd, but the other numerous occurrences of words like "canopy," "sphere," and even "bubble" should have prevented Dillow from making this mistake. Consequently, the majority of pp. 194-95 are addressed to the critique of a model which no one has yet proposed.

Finally, in the discussion of "blast freezing" of mammoths (p. 418), a wind chill table should have been included. Dillow doesn't appear to consider the wind chill factor.

In spite of these occasional scientific shortcomings, Joseph Dillow has made a massive contribution to creation science. In his well-balanced concluding chapter ("How It All Fits Together"), the author modestly states concerning his water vapor canopy model (in contrast to water in liquid form, or ice, or clouds): "Even though such a model is not specifically taught in Scripture, it is the only form in which the water heaven could have been maintained without appeal to special miracle" (p. 422). Thus, while some of the ten separate predictions drawn from his model might be explained in other ways by historical geologists, "the efficiency of any theory is verified by the number of facts correlated divided by the number of assumptions made. So the vapor canopy model may be a helpful theory within which to structure further investigation of prehistory" (p. 422).

Four pages of warm and powerful "spiritual implications" of his study conclude *The Waters Above*. Among his final sentences are these: "Faith . . . as presented in the Bible . . . means coming to God and deciding to trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and entrance into heaven rather than continuing to trust in ourselves. Many sincere Christians who are scientists would not agree with the vapor canopy theory presented in this book. Many others would accept most of it. What all would agree on, however, is the vital need to receive Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord" (p. 426). With this perspective the reviewers would heartily agree.



## REVIEW ARTICLE

### *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon*

Charles R. Smith

*The Fundamentalist Phenomenon: The Resurgence of Conservative Christianity*, ed. by Jerry Falwell, with Ed Dobson and Ed Hindson. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981. Pp. 270. \$13.95.

Jerry Falwell asked two of his key pastoral associates, Ed Hindson (a Grace Theological Seminary alumnus) and Ed Dobson, "to write a book that would trace the rise, growth, development, and contemporary impact of fundamentalism" (p. vii). This book is the result, and I agree with Falwell that Hindson and Dobson have admirably fulfilled their assignment. Their picture of fundamentalism is fair and balanced, properly noting both strengths and weaknesses.

The purpose of Chapter 1 is to cite evidences that "Fundamentalism is Alive and Well." The problem of definition is introduced (Just who is a fundamentalist?) and statistical data, especially from the *Christianity Today*-Gallup Poll, is summarized.

Chapter 2 surveys the history of religious non-conformity. At times the organizing principles of this historical survey are obscure. The non-conformist groups discussed include such doctrinally divergent groups as the Montanists and the Brethren. During the process of reading, one cannot help but wonder why such individuals as Marcion and Montanus are included, while other more notable individuals, equally well known for their doctrinal non-conformity, are excluded. One especially wonders why Savonarola, Luther, and Zwingli are discussed, yet Calvin is strangely absent. But a careful reading of the Concluding Observations at the end of the chapter sheds light on this enigma. For Hindson and Dobson, a non-conformist is one who, along with other convictions, believes in a separation of church and state (p. 53). Apparently Calvin's relationship with the state places him outside the tradition of non-conformity. Further questions are raised by the presentation of "a definite set of basic principles held in common opposition to mainline Christianity" by non-conformists. One of these shared principles is "involvement in the State," yet under this heading non-conformists are divided into three major groups, one of which is said to emphasize "witness *without* political involvement" (p. 55, emphasis added).

The section on involvement with the State ends with the assertion that "the historical position of religious non-conformity is one of spiritual confrontation with society itself" (p. 55). Since this is such a critical premise for Falwell's presentation on behalf of Moral Majority, Inc., at the end of the book, perhaps it is not impertinent to respond that (1) a "historic position" (especially one with non-conformist exceptions?!), as the authors would agree, is not necessarily a wise or a biblical position; (2) "*spiritual* confrontation" (emphasis added) may have varying definitions; and (3) "confrontation with society" need not be the same thing as organized, ecumenical, Christian, or church pressure to control State policies. The line between "separation of church and state" and "involvement in the state" is often blurred! Many "non-conformists" may agree with most or all of the moral principles of the Moral Majority yet question the wisdom of attempting to coerce either society in general or the state in particular to accept what we may identify as Christian principles. Some evangelicals and fundamentalists believe that we may have a greater impact as non-conformists by "forcing" society to see that we are different than by "forcing" society to be like us! At the same time this does not deny the right or responsibility of individual Christians in a democratic society to have a positive effect on that society.

An important misprint occurs on p. 48, where it is stated that Darby divided history into dispensations "in which God *dwelt* in a different manner with different people" (emphasis added). On p. 73 the correct word, "dealt," is used in a similar statement.

Chapter 3 presents a helpful, though brief, survey of America's religious heritage. As asides, this reviewer would join Pentecostals in objecting to the remark that their emphasis on charismatic gifts is "diametrically opposed" to their acceptance of a dispensational scheme (p. 70), and would object to the comment that the "dispensationalists' [assumed] lack of social concern and involvement with the present world" was (or is) due to their dispensational scheme (p. 73). With regard to the latter, would it not be fairer to assert that a mark of fundamentalism, including dispensationalism, is its greater emphasis on spiritual than on social concerns? Indeed, it is on this very basis that some evangelicals question the wisdom and the congruity of a fundamentalist Moral Majority campaign.

Chapter 4 summarizes the major events of the fundamentalist war with liberalism between 1900 and 1930. It includes abridged biographies of major personalities involved in this war. The brevity of treatment allows for a number of ambiguities and optional interpretations. For example, the statement that William Jennings Bryan's fiasco in attempting to defend creation "proved disastrous for Bryan and Fundamentalism" is certainly an overstatement (p. 86). In fact, it could be argued that the event served as a catalyst for more reasoned defenses and for the subsequent advance of fundamentalism.

With regard to the waning days of the fundamentalist-liberal controversy (1925-30), the authors state: "In the twelve years since its inception, the organization [the World's Christian Fundamentalist Association] had lost the vitality and purpose for which it was originally founded. Rather than fighting modernism, it was now committed to building its own movements through churches, schools, and colleges" (pp. 90-91). It is hoped that readers will not

view this as a detriment to the fundamentalist movement. To the contrary, it could be argued, as the following chapter implies (p. 110), that this was not the waning of a war but the real beginning! With this in mind, one cannot help but wonder why the founding of Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924 by Lewis Sperry Chafer, as a direct reaction to contemporary liberalism, was not even mentioned in the chapter. In view of the statistics regarding fundamentalist/evangelical pastors, educators, and publications, a Dallas propagandist could build a case suggesting that no event of that period accomplished more for the cause of fundamentalism/evangelicalism. (Amazingly, it is later affirmed [p. 128] that the World Baptist Fellowship retained "*national prominence and influence* through the Arlington [Texas] Baptist schools"!)

Chapter 5 describes the "Aftermath" of the great fundamentalist-liberal controversy. The introduction to the chapter speaks of "three separate impulses: Fundamentalism, Liberalism, and Evangelicalism" (p. 109). In spite of the asserted need to understand the role of evangelicalism (as well as that of liberalism) if one is to understand the apparently *different* role of fundamentalism, these roles are not separated or delineated in this chapter. Chapter 6 does draw clear distinctions between fundamentalists and "*New Evangelicals*" (sometimes labeled only as "Evangelicals"). There is a one-page paragraph in Chapter 5 which discusses the issue of secondary separation and concludes with the obvious statement that "the *degree* of one's separatism became a hotly debated issue in many fundamentalist circles" (p. 140). This remark certainly deserves elaboration. In earlier periods (as in Chapter 1 of this book) fundamentalism and evangelicalism were described primarily in doctrinal terms as in opposition to liberalism. But it is safe to conclude that the distinction now often recognized (as in Chapter 5 of this book) between evangelicals and fundamentalists is not essentially doctrinal but is based primarily on views of separation (or separatism)—especially as this relates to attitudes toward social issues and relationships with those who differ. Apparently an evangelical is one who holds to the doctrines formerly identified as the marks of fundamentalism, whereas a fundamentalist is one who shares these convictions but is also opposed (1) to any emphasis on social welfare as of greater or equal importance with evangelism, and (2) to any cooperation with liberals which would give the impression that they are to be recognized as fellow believers. In addition, in some circles, the term is reserved for those who live a distinctively separatist lifestyle in abstaining from any use of alcoholic beverages and attendance at commercial movie theaters (cf. p. 156). Since evangelicals and fundamentalists alike are sometimes alarmed by extreme fundamentalist attitudes (such as those represented by Norris in the past or by Ruckman in the present), it is no wonder that some have preferred to avoid the opprobrium often associated with the fundamentalist label (or what is known as the "fundamentalist mentality"). In view of these concerns, perhaps it is best to define a fundamentalist as one (1) who believes the fundamentalist doctrines, (2) who is willing to accept the label, and (3) who will be recognized as such by a majority of others who are willing to accept the label!

The implicit thesis of the opening paragraphs of Chapter 6 is that by 1976 the fundamentalist movement appeared to be as permanently fragmented as was Humpty Dumpty after his fall, but Jerry Falwell and the

Moral Majority put the pieces together again! As the movement united against liberalism in the 1920s, so it has now united against secular humanism. These opening statements, along with the chapter title, "The Resurgence of Fundamentalism," hardly prepare the reader for the actual contents of the chapter. It does not deal with any resurgence at all (whether real or imagined) but describes reactionary fundamentalism, neo-evangelicalism, and the weaknesses of fundamentalism. The picture of fundamentalism is one of dismal fragmentation and excessive bickering, with only the primary strengths of individual commitment and zeal.

In describing the fundamentalist fragmentation, the chapter introduces the problem caused by hyper-fundamentalists who accuse main-line fundamentalists, such as Jerry Falwell, of being pseudo-fundamentalists or even pseudo-neo-fundamentalists. Apparently, the primary characteristic of a pseudo-neo-fundamentalist is that he has been friendly with the neo-evangelicals—at least he is not as spiritual or as separated as the one who assigned him that label!

Chapter 6 includes a careful explication of both the concerns and the errors of neo-evangelicalism. It is duly noted (p. 163) that the evangelicalism of the 1940s was in reality fundamentalism under another name. But ambiguity in labeling cannot be avoided. The term "evangelical" is sometimes the equivalent of fundamentalist and sometimes its antithesis. This ambiguity is not entirely the fault of the authors. Indeed, contrary to the practice of many authors when dealing with this subject, they have done an admirable job in avoiding unnecessary labeling and "pigeon-holing."

The most helpful part of Chapter 6, and of the entire book, is its discussion of the weaknesses of fundamentalism. The evaluation is honest and irenic and should be carefully studied by every fundamentalist (and/or evangelical). Major weaknesses cited include the following: (1) Little capacity for self-criticism; (2) Over-emphasis on external spirituality; (3) Resistance to change; (4) Exaltation of minor issues; (5) The temptation to add to the Gospel (eschatological distinctives, etc.); (6) Over-dependence on dynamic leadership; (7) Excessive worry over labels and associations; (8) Absolutism; and (9) Authoritarianism.

The final section is Jerry Falwell's postscript which presents an "Agenda for the Eighties." It incorporates his agenda for, description of, and defense of Moral Majority, Inc. It is not a chapter of the book. It is related to the historical review of fundamentalism (the rest of the book) only in that it is Falwell's vision of what fundamentalism should accomplish. I will not attempt here to present a full evaluation of Moral Majority, Inc. All fundamentalists (and/or conservative evangelicals) share many, if not all, of the concerns of Dr. Falwell. But, as everyone knows, there are genuine differences of opinion, especially regarding methodology. As individuals, Christians certainly have all the rights which Falwell endorses for the Moral Majority, and certainly this organization has the right to disseminate the convictions of its supporters on all the issues with which they are concerned. But since not all sins can be placed in the category of those which should be outlawed by the state, many fundamentalists have sincere questions about whether any group of people, even a majority, in our democratic and

pluralistic society has the right to impose its own lifestyle on the general populace.

Many believe that, though the ultimate form of human government will be a theocracy, it is wrong for mere mortals to attempt to establish such a government—whether by force of arms or by other collective coercion. Such attempts will culminate in alignment of force against force. And since according to the testimony of our Lord himself, the majority are on the broad road that leads to destruction (and are thus *immoral*), the prospects for success in such a conflict are not bright.

In order to preserve the right of fundamentalists to boycott television sponsors, Falwell must endorse the right of ERA advocates to boycott states that have refused to ratify the amendment (pp. 191-92). The right of *individuals* to do so in either case is not questioned. But is it right for 100,000 activists from across the nation to prevent conventions from meeting in Illinois—to the great detriment of that state and its citizens who have voted against the amendment?

Though there may never be complete agreement on the answers to questions of methodology such as those posed above, Falwell is to be commended for his irenic approach and Christian attitude. All evangelicals (and/or fundamentalists) should read this book and ponder its call to genuine Christian unity and to active confrontation with a sin-wrecked culture. He is right in appealing to “true fundamentalists” who are to the left of the “hyper-fundamentalists,” and to “sincere evangelicals,” who are to the right of the “neo-evangelicals” to acknowledge their common ground and heritage.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Crucial Questions in Apologetics*, by Mark M. Hanna. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981. Pp. 139. \$5.95. Paper.

Apologetics is the theological discipline that brings theology to interface with philosophy. The key point of contact is epistemology. This provocative book questions the correctness of empirical epistemology as well as that of presuppositional epistemology. Veridicalism is presented as a more adequate epistemological starting point that will satisfy the claim of special revelation, the claims of experience, and the claims of reason.

A brief presentation of subject matter is followed by a section of questions and answers. A review of contemporary challenges, the relation of apologetics and theology, and the distinctive approaches of presuppositionalism, verification, and veridicalism constitute the pattern of the work. Significant criticisms are brought against both the presuppositionalist and the verificationist. These criticisms warrant careful consideration from each position. Criticism is balanced with appreciation for that which Hanna feels is of value from each of these divergent views.

Veridicalism's vision seems to be a form of foundationalism. Knowledge can be reduced to certain foundations. These foundations in the past have either led to skepticism through empiricism, or to dogmatism through rational apriorism. Hanna seeks to escape both by reducing knowledge to phenomenological givens. He defines a given as that which presents itself to awareness, does so directly, and as something that can be corroborated by reflective examination of it and its comportment with other givens. Givens are of two types. There are self-evidencing givens, like the principle of noncontradiction, and perceptual objects, that are universal and thus form neutral ground for the believer and unbeliever. There are self-evidencing special givens like the Bible (pp. 101-3).

The focus of the vision of veridicalism is now clear. Both empirical and non-empirical universal givens are used in gaining certainty. Justification of the truth of Christianity stems from the union of the special givens of Bible with the relevant universal givens. A major question arises over what union or comportment actually mean? Is this a form of phenomenological idealism in which rational coherence to givens is the basis to justify truth claims?

Hanna has promised another book to expand and develop veridicalism. One hopes that the question/answer format is abandoned, for at best the questions seemed contrived and not the most relevant questions to be asked



in light of the content. Veridicalism is a creative position in apologetics and this seed book deserves wide reading in the evangelical community.

JAMES GRIER  
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*Introduction to Philosophy*, by Norman Geisler and Paul Feinberg. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980. Pp. 447. \$14.95.

Students in introduction to philosophy courses will benefit greatly from this well written, concise, and rather inexpensive textbook. The authors have chosen the problem/question approach to deal with the content of philosophy. Four major problems are addressed by the questions: What is knowledge? What is real? What is ultimate? and, What is good or right? These questions are answered by the subject content of epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of religion, and ethics. In each part of the text a consistent method is used to explicate the subject. A survey of proposed solutions to the problem is given, a critique is offered of all the non-theistic solutions, and a Christian perspective is developed to solve the problem.

Most introductory textbooks overlook the need to give a basic section on the function of inductive and deductive arguments in the study of philosophy. The strength of the introductory section is the helpful chapter on tools and their use in philosophical inquiry. The weakness of the introductory section from a Christian theistic perspective is the lack of any discussion of the relation of Christian philosophy to the theological disciplines.

The book is written from the theological perspective of a very limited Calvinism and from the apologetical stance of evidentialism. Vindication of Christian theism is based on the principle of stultification inherent in all non-theistic positions. Christianity is demonstrable on the basis of inductive probability. The evidence is better explained by Christianity than by any other form of theism. Thomistic proofs are reworked as the basis for positive proof of theism. Reason is the basis for judging whether or not the Bible is a revelation from God. Once the inductive inference from the evidence for the Bible is accepted, then reason must not be used to judge or reject any part of the revelation. Reason now must take its place under revelation (pp. 269, 270). One must make an unconditional commitment to Christianity which exceeds the probable evidence we possess. Certainty cannot be attained when dealing with matters of experience like the resurrection of Christ and our experience of saving grace. The impossibility of certainty is replaced by certitude concerning these beliefs through the internal work of the Holy Spirit in which he gives internal assurance (pp. 129-31).

Perhaps the most telling criticism is that this is mostly a book about philosophy and not a philosophy book. Much of the material is a descriptive recitation of views and problems without vital interaction with the subject matter. Lively interaction with the literature takes place in the small yet valuable sections that offer critique of non-theistic positions. One could wish that more of the subject had been handled in this vital way.

JAMES GRIER  
CEDARVILLE COLLEGE

*Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Historical Setting*, by Robert Banks. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980 (American edition published through special arrangement with Paternoster Press, England). Pp. 208. \$5.95. Paper.

This interesting work includes a preface, introduction, eighteen chapters, conclusion, appendix, bibliography, and glossary. It is designed to be "not a technical work, nor a popular one either" (p. 7). Paul is approached "as a social thinker rather than a systematic theologian" (p. 8). The author is Senior Lecturer in the School of History, Philosophy, and Politics at Macquarrie University, Sydney, Australia. He has been involved in developing house churches in Canberra and Sydney.

Banks' desire to write neither a technical nor a popular work is at once both an advantage and a disadvantage. His style of writing is easily comprehensible; no one should be afraid of going in "over his head" with this book. The book is footnoted only with references to the NT, Qumran, and rabbinic literature. This format makes for a readable work, and hopefully the book will be widely read by both pastors and informed "lay" people. (Banks would not like this distinction!) However, the book may be viewed as "too technical" by many "lay" people and as "too shallow" by scholars. At times I wished for more depth in the use of Greek and for interaction with opposing viewpoints. Thus, the book could miss both the popular and scholarly markets.

Banks approaches Paul from a warmly appreciative evangelical viewpoint. Though he has high respect for the Bible, he registers doubts about the authenticity of Ephesians, Acts, and the pastoral epistles in his introduction (pp. 11-12). At the end of the book he cautiously concludes that the evidence does not "require, though it may permit," a non-Pauline view of the authorship of Ephesians (p. 192). Though he does not view Luke as purveying "early catholicism" in Acts, he does judge the pastoral epistles in this fashion. The title of the Appendix, "The Drift of the Pastorals," cryptically expresses his conclusion that in the pastorals "the first tentative steps away from Paul's ideas of community were made with the best intentions, in the name of Paul himself!" (p. 198). These sentiments mar an otherwise respectful attitude for God's inerrant Word.

After two brief introductory chapters on the historical setting of Paul's churches and the radical freedom possessed by believers, Banks discusses the church as both a household gathering and a heavenly reality. This second category, a "heavenly reality," is Banks' term for what has been variously classified as the "mystical" or "universal" church, or the "church triumphant." Banks does not like the term "universal church" (pp. 37, 44-47), though it is difficult to see a great deal of difference between his "heavenly reality" church and the dispensational view of the universal church.

The following two chapters on the metaphors of the church as a family and as a body were the most helpful to me personally. Banks has probed deeply and successfully into Paul's thought here (pp. 52-70). The material on the intellectual elements in Christian growth was also quite informative and stimulating (pp. 71-79). Following these enriching studies are chapters which survey the "ordinances," spiritual gifts, the role of women, and Paul's relationship to his churches.

Many readers of the *GTJ* will disagree with Banks on various exegetical and theological points. He views Ephesians as a "general letter addressed to a broad group of Christians" (pp. 10–11, cf. p. 44). This view is assumed without any discussion of the textual problem of Ephesians 1:1 or the fact that ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ is the title of this letter in the ancient manuscripts.\* Banks' position that the "Colossian heresy" had its background in the Hellenistic mystery religions rather than in Judaism is also debatable (p. 77). All of the spiritual gifts (χαρίσματα) are viewed as permanent, including tongues and revelatory prophecy (pp. 95, 123–24). The problem concerning women which Paul confronts in 1 Corinthians 11 concerns length of hair, not the wearing of veils (p. 124). Women may teach and preach in Paul's communities (p. 127), since the restrictions of the pastoral epistles are evidently deutero-Pauline (p. 195). There were no formal offices of bishop or deacon in Paul's churches (pp. 146–50). Here Banks labors to exegete Phil 1:1 and Acts 14:23, but the result is not at all convincing. Again a supposed "early Catholic" thrust is seen in the pastorals (pp. 195–96).

These problems by no means weaken the major purpose of the book. It is quite successful in underlining the major features of Paul's house churches. Even if one does not agree that this primitive pattern is normative for today one can still profit from the book. It offers a needed criticism, both to institutionalized denominationalism and to the "bigger is always better" philosophy of church growth. Pastors and others concerned with the inner life and dynamic of the local church will profit from this work.

DAVID L. TURNER

\*For a defense of the view that Ephesians was addressed to Ephesus, see *GTJ* 2 (1981) 59–73.

*Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*, by Henry A. Virkler. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981. Pp. 255. \$12.95.

Normally, when one peruses a textbook on hermeneutics, all that is found is the discussion of general and special interpretive principles for approaching a biblical text. However, the critical need within the evangelical community is not another book which simply elucidates hermeneutical principles, but instead, a work which helps the student to translate the principles of hermeneutical theory into practical exegetical steps. It is in this area that Virkler seeks to make a distinct contribution, and he has succeeded in his endeavor.

The work resembles those of Mickelsen and Ramm in many respects. For example, Virkler initially outlines the history of interpretation and then sets forth principles both general and special for interpreting the sacred text. However, Virkler is more up-to-date, with discussion of current hermeneutical issues in several areas. Several will be highlighted.

In his introduction Virkler focuses on some major, controversial issues in contemporary hermeneutics. One of these is the issue of "validity in interpretation." After interacting with E. D. Hirsch's significant work, *Validity in Interpretation*, he concludes that it is "the task of the exegete to determine as closely as possible what *God* meant in a particular passage rather than what

it means to me" (p. 24). Other introductory issues which are given consideration are *sensus plenior* (which he rejects) and "inerrancy" (which he strongly supports).

In the discussion of "The History of Biblical Interpretation," Virkler devotes considerable space to the NT writers' use of the OT. He opts for a "normal" approach to the OT by the NT authors and concludes that such a practice "lays the basis for the grammatical-historical method of modern evangelical hermeneutics" (p. 58).

The highlight of Virkler's discussion on "general hermeneutics" is his treatment of "Theological Analysis." He notes that theological analysis asks the question, "How does this passage fit into the total pattern of God's revelation?" (p. 152). He offers a discussion of several theoretical systems which claim to present that "pattern," from "Dispensationalism" (which Virkler presents as stressing more discontinuity than continuity) to "Covenantal Theory" (which is presented as being on the opposite end of the spectrum). Virkler himself seems to prefer what he calls the "Epigenetic Model," a model which may be viewed as a middle road between Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology. Virkler further attempts to offer a methodology for deciding among the different models. His attempt, however, is less than convincing.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the entire volume is found in the last two chapters. In his chapter on "Applying the Biblical Message," Virkler states that to show legitimately the relevance of the narrative portions of Scripture for contemporary believers, the method of "principlizing" must be practiced. With this the reviewer would heartily agree. He argues that a failure to do this will lead to a "B.C. message" instead of one that is applicable to believers today.

In the same chapter Virkler also proposes a model for translating biblical commands from one culture to another. Although he is successful in establishing guidelines for the translation of principles, he does not really solve the problems related to the translation of the "behavioral expression" of principles, particularly in terms of thorny passages such as 1 Cor 11:2-16.

Virkler concludes with an excellent discussion of the minister's task and strongly argues for "expository preaching" as that which should characterize the church today instead of "sermonizing."

The pedagogical value of Virkler's work will be appreciated by both teachers and students of hermeneutics. He includes throughout the volume "brain teasers" (as he calls them), which are practical exercises to involve the student in the application of the principles being outlined. He also furnishes very helpful chapter summaries and proposes further recommended reading throughout his discussions. There is the inclusion of a very helpful bibliography on *sensus plenior* as well as a general list of over 100 works in the field of hermeneutics. This reviewer, however, was surprised not to see included such standard works as James Barr's *The Semantics of Biblical Language* and Earle Ellis's *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*. The book is well written and quite irenic in presentation. It should be welcomed as a helpful contribution to the study of hermeneutics.

TRACY L. HOWARD  
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*Islam: A Survey of the Muslim Faith*, by C. George Fry and James R. King. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980. Pp. 157. \$5.95.

*It will be of interest to our readers to know that our reviewer, Rev. Fred Plastow, has been ministering to the Muslim peoples since 1964, serving with the Gospel Missionary Union in North Africa and several European countries. He holds the M.A. in Missions from Grace Theological Seminary. His thesis, "An Examination of the Quranic Doctrine of Inspiration," is receiving considerable attention.*

Recent political and economic events have focused the attention of the West on the Muslim world. While most secular writers ignore or misunderstand the Islamic religious influence, authors C. George Fry and James R. King seek to present an overview of the Muslim faith for the Christian who may be in contact with Muslims. George Fry is Director of Missions Education at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Co-author James R. King is Professor of English at Wittenberg University. They previously co-authored *The Middle East: Crossroads of Civilization*.

This volume could be termed scholarly because of the evident grasp of the religion and history of Islam manifested in the book. The authors are also aware of the Arabic language and related Islamic terms. The book contains a good balance of geography, history of the Muslim faith, and the religious beliefs and practices of Islam—all in readable style.

In the preface the authors state, "This book . . . is dedicated to the assumption that our only real way out of the difficult challenges facing us throughout the Islamic world is the way of understanding and reconciliation" (p. xii). Their premise is that dialogue is the most fruitful means of approach and that many commonly shared beliefs and symbols of Islam and Christianity can be a basis for this dialogue. One is surprised later then to read, "In short, the outlook for dialogue or understanding is not very hopeful" (p. 135). In giving an example of dialogue, the authors state, "A recent meeting of Muslim and Catholic scholars was 'a dialogue with the deaf': the Muslim scholars had not taken the time to familiarize themselves with Christianity because they thought such familiarity might corrupt them. The conference was a failure" (p. 136). These statements, coupled with the admission that all initiative for dialogue comes from the West (p. 138), may provoke the reader to ask if dialogue is indeed the best approach to Islam.

The Christian reader, believing that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation, will be somewhat astonished at the authors' attitude toward Islam and its seeming clash with orthodox faith. For example, when stating that the Arabic Allah is related to the Hebrew form El and Elohim, they add, "all scholars seem agreed that there is no difference in meaning between the Islamic concept represented by 'Allah,' the Christian concept represented by 'God,' and the Hebrew concept of 'Jahweh.' The view of God is the same among all the so-called people of the Book" (p. 48). This evaluation seems to ignore the revelational character of the God of the Bible and would equate the Qur'an, which is the basis of Islam's concept of God, with the Holy Scriptures. Throughout the book the authors seek to draw parallels between Islam and Christianity. It is not until the last chapter that they insist upon the uniqueness of Christianity, yet in terms less than evangelical. "We can



appreciate the fact that Islam is a system of faith and ritual and duty, that it embodies law, custom, language, philosophy, and art, at the same time that we insist that it lacks the central figure who is for us both a symbol and a means by which human beings are transformed" (p. 130).

It is the authors' views of the Islamic prophet Mohammed that will provoke the sensibility of many Christians. A few samples: "In his dual role as statesman-organizer and prophet-teacher Muhammad is seen to deserve richly his name, which in Arabic means 'the praised one'" (p. 35). "By Muslims, his life has been taken as a model, as *example*. Like certain other great mystics, Moses, for example, Muhammad himself apparently enjoyed intimate, direct, personal contact with God. And like so many other great religious leaders, he himself became a symbol of certain spiritual realities, certain cosmic truths" (p. 52).

In describing the Night of Power, known in Islam as the supposed time when Muhammad received angelic revelations from Gabriel, the authors comment on "the impressions left in his mind; the external teachings about morality that were embodied in what he heard; the sense of personal transformation; the experience of prophethood; the sense of such perfect attunement to God that divine will and human will coalesced" (p. 52). Implied in such statements is an acceptance of Muhammad's prophethood and an acknowledgment that divine revelation was the result of Muhammad's experience.

"Beneath this man of piety there is yet another level: the Islamic sense of the Prophet as perfect man or archetypal man, the universal man who enters history at a particular time and is worthy of imitation by all. At this level of understanding, such epithets as 'Thy Servant,' 'Thy Messenger,' 'Thy Friend,' the 'Illiterate Prophet,' and even 'Our Lord' may appropriately be used" (pp. 54-55). According to this language, are the authors referring to the Muslim view or their own?

"For Muslims the Qur'an embodies the will, the thought, the word of God. Thus it seems that comparisons between Christ and the Qur'an are appropriate, and they are made here with reverence" (p. 61).

A climactic statement touches on the incarnation. "If indeed he [Muhammad] was not able to read, there is a striking parallel between the unlettered prophet giving birth to the Arabic Word and the Virgin Mary giving birth to Christ, the Word of God" (p. 62). We doubt whether the readers of this journal would accept such a statement. We note a definite tendency on the part of the authors to attribute special spiritual powers to Muhammad and to exalt him as a true prophet of God.

The authors err (p. 63) in stating concerning the Uthmanic recension of the Qur'an made by Zaid ibn Thabit, thirty years after Muhammad's death, that the vowels were added to the text so that there would be no dispute about the meaning of the text. The truth is that vowelizing wasn't introduced until over a century later, and many 9th century texts were vowelless. There is also the fact that there are variant readings of the Qur'an. Arthur Jefferey has published a list of texts that show several thousand variant readings (*Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1937]).

The authors state, "The Qur'an is regarded as Muhammad's one miracle, not only by Muslims who are themselves unlettered, but by scholars and



theologians as well" (p. 64). Hopefully, Fry and King are referring to Muslim scholars and theologians and not Christian ones. Muslims hold that the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>an is a miracle because no such Arabic could ever be equalled for beauty and style. However, the argument is tenuous in that Arabic was the language of the Arabian Peninsula. When the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>an was revised to guard the purity of the Arabic against the intrusion of words from other dialects, the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>anish word (used by Muhammad's tribe) was given preference. It has also been shown that the poetry of the Mu<sup>ʿ</sup>allaqat is similar to the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>an. Furthermore, the best literature that any language might produce is only a value judgment, not a proof of inspiration.

While arguing against all forms of syncretism in approach to Muslims, the authors state, "We have already discussed, and we will make further comment on, some of the important similarities between Islam and Christianity, but at the same time we must recognize that deeply committed believers on both sides will continue to confess that the heart of what they believe is not negotiable, that it is too precious to compromise" (p. 130). Here the authors seem to have answered for themselves the real drawback of this form of dialogue. Ultimately, it is an agreement to live in a state of plurality with no hope of conversion.

One passage which has and will offend many Christians, especially those engaged in evangelism among Muslims, is the following: "Another questionable model, which certain Christians continue to find appropriate, however, is to fulfill the obligation to proclaim the gospel by handing out tracts and broadcasting radio messages. Such an approach, which avoids personal contact and involvement, appears to be indifferent as to who is listening or responding. It strikes us, therefore, as a perversion of the Christian gospel and its message of caring for, loving, and nurturing individuals. Ultimately it is a denial of the incarnation. This kind of indifference is particularly serious in dealing with Muslims, who have such strong roots in the 'ummah' or community" (p. 131).

The authors have certainly laid a serious accusation against certain missionary activities. The reviewer wonders if they have considered two important facts. One is that several Muslim countries do not countenance Christian activity on their soil, and thus radio and correspondence courses are practically the only form of witness possible. Second, the authors seem to be unaware of the thousands of Muslims who are studying the Bible through correspondence courses and listening to radio broadcasts and that hundreds have come to saving faith in Christ through these means. Rather than being a denial of the incarnation, God has been pleased to convert men through means of his Word given at the hands of his concerned and dedicated servants.

In evaluating the work, the reviewer is saddened to see the authors take a position that dialogue is the only means of communicating the gospel to Muslims and which denegrates other positive means that are being used. One wonders if they would want such application made in our society. Is the pulpit or conversation the only acceptable means of gospel witness?

Second, one senses that the authors are caught up in the current trend to appreciate and even commend and exalt Islam as a religion. The authors tend especially to exalt the Islamic prophet to a place of real prophethood and recipient of revelation and inspiration. In no case can the Christian think of Muhammad as he thinks of Christ.

Third, the reviewer feels that the book tends to blunt the Christian fervor in preaching the gospel to lost Muslims. The authors quote with approval Virginia Cobb's view, "the best defined evangelical posture." "We are not trying to change anyone's religion" (p. 137). In view of Islam's denial of the redemptive work of Christ and the statement of Jesus, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," we cannot agree that Cobb's view is the best definition of the evangelical position.

Finally, the reviewer feels that the authors have failed to discern the vast anti-Christ system of religion that denies the deity of our Lord, his Sonship, and his redemptive cross-sufferings. These have always been the real stumbling block to a Muslim coming to Christ. The reviewer feels that what is needed is not a greater appreciation and understanding of Islam but a greater appreciation of our highly exalted Savior who is coming soon to reign over all the earth.

FRED PLASTOW

*Prescription for Preaching*, by Woodrow Michael Kroll. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980. Pp. 278. \$9.95.

When he wrote this book, Dr. Kroll was the Chairman of the Division of Religion at Liberty Baptist College. In January, 1981, he became the President of The Practical Bible Training School in Johnson City, NY.

Kroll has taken on a broader objective than the title of his book would indicate. It is his purpose to provide a ". . . self-contained course on the theory and practice of public speaking and homiletics" (p. vii). In keeping with that broad purpose Kroll takes up many subjects not normally undertaken in a homiletics book, utilizing five chapters for the first part (pp. 1-114), four chapters for homiletics in general (pp. 115-82) and a final chapter to set forth his prescription for preaching (pp. 183-255).

One could be "picky" with some minor things within the book. For instance, Kroll says that his book contains ". . . time-tested principles of speech with a heretofore unknown, but equally time-tested, approach to homiletics" (p. vii). If this approach to homiletics were heretofore unknown, how could it possibly be equally time-tested with the principles of speech which have been known from the days of Aristotle? But this might cause us to lose sight of all the positive contributions that the book has made.

Other things in the book are more serious and do demand comment and correction in future editions of the book. Probably the most serious flaws are found in the chapter, "Your Remarkable Sound System." After an excellent discussion on the necessity for studying and mastering the art of speaking, Kroll turns to a discussion of the mechanics of speech. He is to be commended for his attempt to relate these things on the level of the layman, but at times he does so at the expense of basic accuracy. He frequently refers to the "vocal cords," an archaic and inaccurate description for the bundles of muscles more properly called "vocal folds." He suggests that the remedy for breathiness in voice quality is to combine ". . . the proper method of breathing and better articulation" (p. 39). But in the final analysis breathiness is caused by too much air passing through the glottis and can be remedied

neither by breathing nor articulation (for neither of these transpires in the larynx) but through a closer approximation of the vocal folds to one another. The most serious problem in this section comes in his discussion of "Diaphragmatic Breathing." Voice scientists know that the old admonitions from voice and speech teachers "to speak from your diaphragm," "to use diaphragmatic support," and to "tense your diaphragm" are anatomical impossibilities! The diaphragm is a muscle of inspiration (pulling air into the lungs) *only* and once it has completed its "intake stroke" electrically shuts off and assumes a coasting checking position ready for the "intake" signal again. One could not "speak" from his diaphragm or "tense" his diaphragm if his life depended on it! Anyone who breathes *does* use his diaphragm. It is possible to get a minimal amount of air into the lungs by expanding the chest cavity, but because of the rib cage, expansion is limited and air must be taken in by using the diaphragm which in its downward stroke causes the abdomen to expand.

Kroll urges one to lie on his back and observe that his abdomen rises when he inhales—so far so good. He points out that this is the natural way to breathe (pp. 44–45) and that somehow we have learned to breathe some other way. The assumption is that in the standing position one breathes exactly as he does in the prone position. This is a false assumption. It is impossible for one to breathe in exactly the same way in both the prone and upright positions. The fact of the matter is that everyone breathes entirely different in each of these positions! Kroll is right, however, in his general intent, though his terminology is wrong. What he wants the speaker to do is to harness his abdominal muscles and use them to increase the air intake and then to exert control over the air as it is pushed through the glottis. He is correct in his contention that many speakers do not use abdominal muscles properly for the best efficiency in speaking. To become aware of the muscles used in speech, one should take in as much air as he can by expanding both his chest and abdominal cavities and then undertake a speech task (like counting as far as he can). When one begins to count he notes that he does so with little problem because the elastic restoring force of the body is pushing the air through the glottis adequately. At midpoint one feels no tension, but as the speaking task continues he begins to feel various muscles being called upon to maintain the push of air until finally he is able to do so no longer. Practice of this task will make one aware of the muscles used in speaking and continued practice will enable one to use those muscles more effectively.

Kroll makes a statement that is inexcusable for its inaccuracy: "Lung breathing alone is not only improper—it is harmful as well" (p. 45). No one can breathe without using his lungs—not to do so is fatal! The lungs are elastic tissue and are air reservoirs only. There is no muscle tissue in them (cf. p. 106 where Kroll talks about the "muscles of the lungs"! ) so they do not assist in taking air in or expelling air. The depression of the diaphragm draws air into the lungs and the muscles of the chest and abdomen control the rate at which the air is expelled from the lungs.

Kroll deserves a hearty "amen" for his exhortation to the preacher to use proper grammar as he asks, "When is it permissible to use improper grammar?" and then states, "The answer is *never*" (p. 75). One just wishes

that Kroll would abide by his own dictum, as he splits nearly every infinitive throughout the course of the book! Other than that, grammatical errors throughout the book are few.

Once again, issue must be taken with Kroll as he talks about grouping the audience together when it has scattered throughout the auditorium. Many preachers make the mistake of seeking to bring the audience together during the singing of a hymn or in response to a ministerial harangue. To do so is in all probability for his own benefit, rather than for the audience's benefit. Studies have shown conclusively that proximity and audience compactness have a minimal effect upon the audience. A person selects where he wants to sit and resents being asked to relocate. For a speaker to do so risks incurring the audience's disfavor, for he has invaded the personal space that they have chosen to put between themselves and him. A person in the audience will hear what he wants to hear. Therefore, the speaker does better to concentrate on the content and relevance of his message than upon the audience's proximity to him or upon their compactness with relation to one another.

The major area of contention with Kroll must be in his presentation of the "Practical" approach to homiletics. By this approach he is referring to an approach originated by Dr. Gordon Davis, former President of the Practical Bible Training School, refined by Dr. John L. Benson, and brought to its present form by the author (cf. pp. vii, 189).

It is good that Kroll calls this method "The 'Practical' Approach to Homiletics." Practical it is—biblical it is not. He admits as much when he states, "They [the points of a sermon utilizing the method] are totally the invention of the preacher, based upon his knowledge of the Word" (pp. 189–90). And again, "You should have noticed that nowhere in our discussion has a text been used. This is because all sermon examples to this point have been of the topical type. They are derived from the fertile garden of the well-read preacher's mind" (p. 211).

The sermons which do use the biblical text do not fare much better under this method, as Kroll states: "The basic difference between the topical textual sermon and the topical sermon is that in the topical textual sermon your ideas are taken from the list of truths *derived from* a text, whereas in the topical sermon ideas are taken from your head" (p. 211, emphasis mine). In this method, the source ultimately is the preacher's head, not the text! After a number of examples, Kroll states, "Two points must be made to aid in this type of preparation. First, one of the key words here is 'implied.' We are concerned with what the text says, but *we are more concerned with the truths that the text implies*" (p. 217, emphasis mine).

Alas, the Topical Expository Sermon does not fair any better under this method! Kroll lists five steps in preparing a Topical Expository Sermon: (1) *Formulate* a list of statements made directly in the passage. (2) *Formulate* a list of practical applications to the statements. (3) *Decide* which of these applications is parallel to each other. (4) *Formulate* a theme which will unify these parallel applications. (5) *Draw* main divisions from the theme and parallel applications" (p. 219, emphasis mine). In this methodology the ultimate authority is the preacher's mind—what he can do to the text; not what the text does to him!

One would hope for better things from the Textual sermon, but not so. Concerning this type of sermon Kroll observes: ". . . the main divisions are

taken directly from the words or expressed ideas of the text. The subdivisions are drawn from parallel incidents in the Scriptures" (p. 234). This certainly is not an exegetical sermon though it may be *drawn from* the Bible! The developing points taken from one text with points taken from numerous others does not result in exposing the text! It results in "shotgunning" and ultimate confusion, for the listener does not come to an understanding of the text from which the preacher says he is preaching.

The Textual Expository sermon is anything but expository under this method for ". . . this type of sermon is one in which the theme is taken from one passage of Scripture but the main divisions are drawn from parallel passages" (p. 235).

When Kroll calls The Expository Sermon ". . . the most important type of sermon" (p. 240) one hopes for better things. Kroll gives some helpful advantages and disadvantages of this type of preaching, but his outline illustrations that follow show that this type of preaching shares the same fate as the others when the "Practical" method is applied to its preparation.

From the standpoint of sermon mechanics, Kroll's method is weakest at the point of the proposition. Nowhere does he teach his readers what a proposition is or how a proposition is used in constructing and delivering sermons. Of the multitude of outlines Kroll gives as illustrations, not one of them has a proper proposition!

From the standpoint of the production of the book, the printer seems to have made a couple of errors. On p. 174, the third suggestion for sources of illustrative material has been inadvertently omitted. Further, Kroll has every right to be angry at the printers for using the back of the dustjacket on his book to advertise a homiletics book by another author!

For all of its flaws, Kroll's book has some outstanding points. Throughout the text Kroll combines a good use of humor to make his points. His style is readable. He does involve the reader by giving him the opportunity to practice structuring sermon outlines utilizing his method (pp. 192-93). The book gives evidence that the author is well read and contains an extensive bibliography covering the past 100 years of preaching. The index of subjects in the back is very helpful for quick reference to the text of the book. Kroll has much to offer the reader and both aspiring and practicing preachers will find much of help in the book. The methodology espoused is its weakest point, for it will teach the preacher how to preach *about* or *from* the Bible, but will not help him to preach *the Bible*! God has promised to honor his Word—not what the preacher can invent from it! In the final analysis, Kroll's book may help one to become a polished pulpiteer, but will do little to help him become an authoritative prophet!

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*Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, by Haddon W. Robinson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980. Pp. 230. \$9.95.

When you read this book you will want to have pen or pencil in hand so that you can mark the many "I wish I had said that" kind of statements it



contains. You will also want to mark portions to which you will want to return later for further reflection.

Beginning with the establishment of the identity of expository preaching and showing that, while most conservative preachers give assent to it, in reality they do not practice it, Robinson walks the preacher through the steps necessary to prepare sermons that truly are expositional/expository. Probably the unique contribution that Robinson makes to the process is the concept of stating the sermon "idea" in subject and predicate form. While this is not new to the field of rhetoric (it can be traced back to Aristotle) few homileticsians have related the concept to sermon preparation. In the text Robinson gives some practice in stating the subject and predicate of the sermon idea and in the appendix gives further examples for additional practice. One seeking to begin expository preaching or seeking to sharpen his skills in the practice will find these drills most helpful.

Two factors would have made a good book better. First, more emphasis on grammatical analysis showing "how to do it." Second, in view of the importance Robinson attributes to the conclusion of the sermon (cf. pp. 167ff.) one wonders why Robinson doesn't put those thoughts into practice and write a fitting conclusion to his book. He does not summarize, restate, or motivate—he simply stops. Perhaps the rationale is that the book is not a sermon! However, what better medium to motivate preachers to have a proper conclusion could one have than a book which is designed to show the preacher "how to do it"?

Any shortcoming the book may have is far outweighed by its excellencies. It will be helpful to any experience preacher and clearly sets forth the privilege and task before the neophyte preacher. It will be helpful as a textbook in homiletics classes on both college and seminary levels and that is precisely why I have adopted it as a textbook for my students.

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*Baptists and the Bible*, by L. Russ Bush and Tom J. Nettles. Chicago: Moody, 1980. Pp. 456. \$10.95.

Russ Bush and Tom Nettles are to be commended for writing this tremendous work encompassing the entire spectrum of Baptists and what they believe about Scripture. For those who have been attempting to discover the meaning of the phrase "historic Baptist position" as it relates to biblical authority, here is a superbly documented effort to elucidate clearly the meaning of that phrase. Bush and Nettles are professors at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where they both received their doctorates.

Why a book on Baptists and the Bible? "Perhaps because the controversial issues surrounding the various ideas about biblical authority have recently been thrust into the forefront in many Christian denominations. Baptists, no less than other denominational groups, need to reach some kind of consensus on what they believe doctrinally if they are to face the future with an effective, bold mission thrust" (p. 15).

The book is divided into three main sections. Part one discusses the origin of early Baptists, from John Smyth (ca. 1600) to the beginning of the modern



missionary movement (William Carey and Adoniram Judson). For those with less interest in Baptist history, this beginning section will read slowly. However, there are excellent sections on the great theologians like John Gill, Andrew Fuller, Roger Williams, John Bunyan, and Benjamin Keach. The section closes with a moving chapter on the separation of Northern and Southern Baptists. One truth stands out in the study of these great men. Even though they differed over several doctrinal and practical issues, all were agreed that the Bible is the Word of God, without error.

Section two examines more recent Baptists, beginning with J. P. Boyce, the founder of Southern Baptist Seminary, and continuing to the famous Northern Baptist preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick. The founding of Southern Baptist Seminary (pp. 201ff.) makes for interesting reading. The first faculty members, including Boyce, Basil Manley, Jr., and John Broadus, were totally committed to the full authority and infallibility of the Scriptures. Chapter ten explains the emotional dismissal of C. H. Toy from the faculty of Southern Seminary because of his shift to an evolutionary and historical-critical view of the Bible. The manner in which the controversy was handled is a beautiful picture of the biblical way to respond to error. Chapter eleven discusses the famous "downgrade controversy" in English Baptist life. The dominant figures involved in the controversy were C. H. Spurgeon and John Clifford. It is a description of Spurgeon's separation from the Baptist Union because Clifford and his followers moved to a position where conscience and reason replaced the Bible as the final authority. The following chapters analyze two great American Baptists: A. H. Strong and Alvah Hovey; and four influential Southern Baptists: E. Y. Mullins, A. T. Robertson, B. H. Carroll, and W. T. Conner. Some will question the authors' conclusions regarding these men, especially regarding Strong and Mullins. Strong's position on evolution and the use of the historical-critical method makes his understanding of biblical infallibility "suspect." One also wonders how Mullins can begin with an experiential starting point (similar to Schleiermacher) and arrive at a position of inerrancy. Herein lies the greatest problem the authors faced. Do the terms "dynamic," "infallible," "inerrant" carry the same theological meaning that they did fifty to eighty years ago? It is a problem with which the reader will also be forced to wrestle. The firm conservative roots of Southwestern Baptist Seminary are seen in Carroll and Conner. The section closes with a discussion of Baptist liberals such as Rauschenbusch, Matthews, Clark, and Fosdick, all of whom deny biblical infallibility.

Part three traces the Baptist confessions from the Charleston Confession of 1665 to the 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message" (the London Confessions were discussed in a prior section of the book). The final chapter is an excellent theological and apologetical discussion of biblical inerrancy. Recent Baptists such as Leon Wood, W. A. Criswell, and Earl Radmacher are not discussed.

*Baptists and the Bible* is an excellent contribution to the fields of Baptist history and bibliology. The summaries are thorough and perceptive. It is sure to find a broad reading among the 29 million Baptists in America as well as students, pastors, theologians, and lay persons who are interested in the current debate over the inspiration and inerrancy of God's Holy Word.

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*Death and the Caring Community*, by Lawrence O. Richards and Paul Johnson. A Critical Concern Book. Portland: Multnomah, 1980. Pp. 210. \$9.95.

There is nothing flashy here, no new theories or revelations about death, just practical suggestions for ministering to the terminally ill. In the opening chapter Richards points to the changes in the cause of death and to the lengthening of the process of dying which have taken place during this century. He notes that "In our modern society, when dying has become a process rather than an event, support from a sensitive, caring community of brothers and sisters who, with wisdom and love can communicate the value of the individual to them and to God, is especially needed" (p. 18).

In chapter three, Dr. Johnson, a medical doctor, shares "Ten Commandments" for caring:

1. "Always tell the truth."
2. "Never set times." (For an impending death)
3. "Listen with sensitivity."
4. "Respond to needs."
5. "Never allow the person to feel abandoned."
6. "Make yourself available."
7. "Don't give medical advice."
8. "If necessary protect the person from himself." (From harmful self-treatment)
9. "Always hold out hope." (Not necessarily the hope of getting well, but hope such as the hope of going home)
10. "Provide spiritual support."

Chapter Four includes a helpful checklist for a ministry to family members.

1. "The family is aware of the nature, treatment, and prognosis of the disease."
2. "The family understands the likely reactions of the patient to terminal illness."
3. "The family members have supportive relationships with others to whom they can talk and express their feelings and needs."
4. "Transportation, baby-sitting, and other needed help are provided to allow family members to visit."
5. "Family members have been provided with 'time off' for recreation, rest, or just time to be on their own."
6. "Spiritual counsel is available to the family as well as to the dying person."
7. "The need to give the dying person as much control as possible over himself and his routines is understood."
8. "There are relationships in which grief can be freely expressed, and these expressions are accepted."

Chapter Nine outlines "A Basic Course in Caring" for those whose life is threatened. The training sessions are organized in fifteen two-hour learning blocks. The sessions do not focus on communicating factual data but on the sharing of feelings and a caring attitude. For this old seminary professor the obvious professional educational approach suggested (group discussions, no "right" answers) often seems too much like a pooling of ignorance. But in this instance it is obviously important to develop communication and sharing skills.

The book abounds in illustrations of the feelings and needs of those whose lives are threatened. The final chapter includes a short bibliography of resource materials relating to the needs of the terminally ill and their loved ones.

CHARLES R. SMITH

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# GRACE THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

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## THIRD (AND FOURTH) CLASS CONDITIONS

JAMES L. BOYER

*Third class conditional sentences, a very frequent type of conditional sentence, are identified and characterized by their use of the subjunctive mood in the protasis. The subjunctive indicates potentiality, contingency, or simple futurity. It is the condition which points to a future eventuality. The common notion that it indicates a degree of probability is examined by inductive study of all the NT examples and is concluded to be totally incorrect. Also, the often-made distinction between present general and future particular conditions within this third class is shown to be neither helpful nor indicated by NT Greek texts. All third class conditions are essentially future contingencies.*

\* \* \*

THE third classification of conditional sentences in the Greek NT occurs almost as frequently as the first and five times more frequently than the second.<sup>1</sup> It is designated by many names, reflecting different understandings on the part of grammarians of its basic significance.

### FORM IDENTIFICATION

This group of conditional clauses is identified by the use of *ἐάν* and the subjunctive mood in the protasis. The *ἐάν* of course is the ordinary conditional particle *εἰ*, found in all the other types of conditions, combined by crasis and contraction with the modal particle *ἄν*.<sup>2</sup> Primarily it is the use of the subjunctive mood which

<sup>1</sup>There are about 305 first-class, 47 second-class, and 277 third-class conditions in the NT. For a treatment of the first and second-classes see my preceding articles, "First-Class Conditions: What Do They Mean?" *GTJ* 2 (1981) 74-114, and "Second-Class Conditions in New Testament Greek," *GTJ* 3 (1982) 81-88.

<sup>2</sup>Historical grammarians point out that in late Greek the distinction between *εἰ* and *ἐάν* seems to be fading. See A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New*

identifies the type. All other conditions use the indicative mood<sup>3</sup> in the protasis.

The apodosis appears in a wide variety of forms. About 150 are simple statements of fact, 32 are questions, 32 are promises or threats, 27 are admonitory, 16 are warnings, 12 are commands, 11 are instructions.

There is no pattern of tenses used, either in the protasis or in the apodosis. In the NT examples there are 110 present, 205 aorist, and 3 perfect subjunctive<sup>4</sup> verbs in the protases. In the apodoses there are 116 present, 119 future, 7 aorist, and 6 perfect indicatives, 25 aorist subjunctives, 26 present and 16 aorist imperatives, 1 present optative, 1 present infinitive (of indirect discourse), and 2 present participles (dependent on an imperative verb). The relationship of this great variety to the significance of this class of condition will be examined later.

In the discussion of this many-faceted grammatical construction two major questions need consideration; first, the significance of the

*Testament in Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 1017. N. Turner says, "It is a feature of Hell. Greek that the connection between the mood and the conjunction (e.g., subj. after ἄν) is becoming less determined, and so we have εἰ with subj., ἔάν with ind., ὅτε with subj., ὅταν with indic., etc. In M Gr only the fuller conjunctions ἔάν and ὅταν remain, and they have both indic. (real) and subj. (probable)" (Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek, Vol. 3: Syntax* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963] 107 n. 2).

The NT text shows a very few variations from the usual pattern of εἰ with the indicative and ἔάν with the subjunctive, and almost always they are textually suspect. The UBS text has 3 examples of εἰ with the subjunctive: Phil 3:12, Rev 11:5 (here it is a verbatim repetition of a normal εἰ + indicative example in the preceeding verse, and apparently with precisely the same meaning), and 1 Cor 14:5 (where ἐκτός εἰ μὴ is a fixed formula). There are two examples of ἔάν with a present indicative: 1 Thess 3:8 and 1 John 5:15 (οἷδα is semantically present). These probably reflect the later confusion which used ἔάν for εἰ and thus should be classified as first-class. There are two examples of ἔάν with a future indicative (Luke 19:40; Acts 8:31) which may also be first class. However, the situation may be different in the case of a future indicative, since these forms in other constructions sometimes seem to function as aorist subjunctives (e.g., 23 instances of ἵνα followed by a future indicative, with no difference in meaning). A. T. Robertson points out, "it is quite probable that the future indicative is just a variation of the aorist subjunctive" (Robertson, *Grammar*, 924-25). Hence, ἔάν with a future indicative may be a normal third-class condition.

<sup>3</sup>The classical fourth-class condition which used the optative mood does not occur in the NT or the Greek of that period except in archaic expressions or fragments of sentences. This type shared with the third class the use of a non-indicative mood. Its relation to the third class and the actual NT remnants will be treated later in this article (see n. 41).

<sup>4</sup>In John 3:27; 6:65; James 5:15. Also, there are three examples (1 John 5:15; 1 Cor 13:2; 14:11) of the perfect subjunctive of οἷδα, but although οἷδα is perfect in form it is in sense present, and I have counted these three among the presents.



subjunctive mood used in the protasis and its bearing on the semantic significance of the type of conditional sentence, and second, the validity of the oft-claimed distinction between the present-general and the future-particular sub-classifications of these εἰν + subjunctive conditions.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE

Since the use of the subjunctive distinguishes this class from the others, it seems obvious that the basic significance must be seen in the meaning of the subjunctive mood. Here we face a confusing divergence of expression on the part of grammarians. As A. T. Robertson says, "... mode is far and away the most difficult theme in Greek syntax."<sup>5</sup> Later he says specifically of the subjunctive mood, "So the grammarians lead us a merry dance with the Subjunctive."<sup>6</sup> In spite of the difficulty and confusion, however, there is wide-spread agreement<sup>7</sup> on its basic meaning.

#### *Mood of Uncertainty, Potentiality, Futurity*

A. T. Robertson, in his *Short Grammar*, calls both the subjunctive and optative moods "the modes for doubtful affirmation."<sup>8</sup> Later, in his major work, he more explicitly summarizes the use of the subjunctive under three headings: (a) futuristic, (b) volitive, and (c) deliberative.<sup>9</sup> Admitting that some do not see these as distinct, yet, "for practical purposes," he uses them. When he deals specifically with conditional sentences he uses the term *undetermined* to designate those which use the subjunctive or optative moods, in contrast with those he calls *determined*, which use the indicative. He explains *undetermined* by saying, "Naturally the indicative is not allowed here. The element of uncertainty calls for the subj. or the optative. . . . They are the moods of doubtful, hesitating affirmation. . . . In this type the premise is not assumed to be either true or untrue. The point is in the air and the cloud gathers round it."<sup>10</sup> He calls the subjunctive "the mode of expectation,"<sup>11</sup> and says of its time reference, "the third class

<sup>5</sup>Robertson, *Grammar*, 912.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 927.

<sup>7</sup>In the following discussion I have chosen to use the words of one well-known and influential scholar, A. T. Robertson, rather than to record the many similar statements of other grammarians. Where there is not this essential agreement I shall seek to compare and evaluate, as, for example, in the section "Degree of Probability."

<sup>8</sup>A. T. Robertson, *A Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929) 129-31.

<sup>9</sup>Robertson, *Grammar*, 928-34.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 1004-5.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 1016.

condition is confined to the future (from the standpoint of the speaker or writer)."<sup>12</sup> He frequently calls attention to this element of futurity: "The subj. is always future, in subordinate clauses relatively future."<sup>13</sup>

Seeking to summarize, it seems to me that the use of the subjunctive points essentially to the condition expressed by the protasis as being doubtful, uncertain, undetermined (because it has not yet been determined). The term *potential* is accurate. It is "not yet." It may be, if. . . . Perhaps the term *contingent* would be even clearer. It depends on any number of factors.<sup>14</sup> In any case, the common denominator is *futurity*. As Goodwin says, the "only fundamental idea always present in the subjunctive is that of futurity,"<sup>15</sup> and he traces it back to the idiom of Homer. Perhaps the best name for this type of condition is simply the *Future Condition*.<sup>16</sup>

### *Basis of Potentiality*

One major item for investigation in this inductive study of all the third class conditions in the NT has been the question of the *basis* of the potentiality. Why does the writer use the mood of contingency? What is the element of uncertainty involved? On what factors or circumstances does the fulfillment of the condition depend? In the study of each example in context, first a "basis of potentiality" was assigned. Afterward, this list was classified under appropriate groupings. The results are seen in this tabulation, with the number so designated, and some examples.

Personal will, choice, judgment	53 <sup>17</sup>
Spiritual condition	23 <sup>18</sup>
Personal actions	109 <sup>19</sup>
Actions of others	36 <sup>20</sup>
Ability, opportunity	4 <sup>21</sup>
Providence or Futurity	61 <sup>22</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 1018.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 924.

<sup>14</sup>See my next section, "Basis of Potentiality."

<sup>15</sup>W. W. Goodwin, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb* (New York: St. Martin's, 1965) 371; cf. also 372-74, 2-4.

<sup>16</sup>J. G. Machen, *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (New York: MacMillan, 1950) 132.

<sup>17</sup>Examples: Matt 21:25, 26; Luke 5:12; 1 John 2:29.

<sup>18</sup>Examples: John 3:3, 5; 8:31; Matt 10:13.

<sup>19</sup>Examples: Mark 3:27; John 13:17; 14:14; Rom 10:9.

<sup>20</sup>Examples: Matt 5:23; Luke 17:3, 4.

<sup>21</sup>Example: Matt 9:21.

<sup>22</sup>Examples: Matt 18:12; Rom 7:3; 1 Cor 4:19; 14:28; 16:10; 1 John 2:28; 3:2.

The purpose in listing these is not to provide a system of classification, but to illustrate and enforce the point that these third class conditions are indeed doubtful, contingent, undetermined, belonging to the future. *All* of the instances manifest this quality. I believe an examination of the examples will confirm this claim.

### *Degree of Probability*

The matter next to be considered brings us to a major problem in the way most grammarians have dealt with the third class conditions: Does the use of the subjunctive imply anything as to the *degree* of uncertainty involved? This clearly is claimed by many grammarians. Robertson calls this "Undetermined, but with prospect of determination" in contrast with the fourth class, "Undetermined, with remote prospect of determination," and says further, "This fourth class is undetermined with less likelihood of determination than is true of the third class with the subj."<sup>23</sup> Of the third class he says, "The subj. mode brings the expectation within the horizon of a lively hope in spite of the cloud of hovering doubt."<sup>24</sup> Blass considers it to denote "circumstances actual or likely to happen."<sup>25</sup> Winer makes it a "condition with assumption of 'objective' possibility where experience will decide whether it is real or not."<sup>26</sup> Burton says of it, "a supposition which refers to the future, suggesting some probability to its fulfillment."<sup>27</sup> Blass-Debrunner describes it as "that which under certain circumstances is expected," calling it "a case of expectation."<sup>28</sup> Chamberlain says of it, "The condition is stated as a matter of doubt, with some prospect of fulfillment," then of the fourth class he says, "even more doubtful than the third class."<sup>29</sup>

Most explicit of these is the grammar of Dana and Mantey. In a very helpful appraisal of the general significance of the subjunctive mood, they point out that there are only "two essential moods . . . that which is actual and that which is possible. . . . So the two essential

<sup>23</sup>Robertson, *Grammar*, 1016, 1020.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 1016.

<sup>25</sup>F. Blass, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Tr. by Henry St. John Thackeray. (London, MacMillan, 1911) 213, 214.

<sup>26</sup>G. B. Winer, *A Grammar of the Idioms of the Greek Language of the New Testament* (Andover: Draper, 1897) 291.

<sup>27</sup>E. D. Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1897) 104.

<sup>28</sup>F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961) 188.

<sup>29</sup>W. D. Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1941) 198-99.

moods in language are the *real*—represented in Greek by the indicative; and the *potential*—embracing the subjunctive, optative and imperative.”<sup>30</sup> Then, however, they proceed to characterize these potential moods as representing a continuum of *degree* of potentiality, from *objectively* possible (subjunctive) to *subjectively* possible (optative) to *volitionally* possible (imperative), or from *probability* (subjunctive) to *possibility* (optative) to *intention* (imperative), or from *mild* contingency (subjunctive) to *strong* contingency (optative). Thus, the third-class condition becomes the “More Probable Future Condition” in contrast with the fourth which they call the “Less Probable Future Condition.”<sup>31</sup>

Are these measurements of potentiality or degrees of probability valid? Can we say of a third-class condition, “There is doubt, of course, but it probably will be realized”? One of the primary purposes of this study was to investigate this question. It is the judgment of the present writer that this scheme, while it may be theoretically logical, is completely unsupported and in fact totally discredited by actual usage in the NT.

In conducting the study, an attempt was made to assign to each of these examples a “measure word” indicating from the context the degree of probability or improbability involved in the realization of the condition. Out of this grew a list of words, arranged here somewhat in a “logical” order, with the number of instances and a few representative examples.

Fulfillment certain	19 <sup>32</sup>
Fulfillment probable	63 <sup>33</sup>
Fulfillment doubtful	20 <sup>34</sup>
Fulfillment improbable	16 <sup>35</sup>
Fulfillment possible	4 <sup>36</sup>
Fulfillment conceivable	30 <sup>37</sup>

<sup>30</sup>H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: MacMillan, 1948) 165–67.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>32</sup>In addition to the illustrations given in the discussion following, see: Mark 4:22; 10:30; John 5:31; 8:14, 16; Rom 2:25; 1 Cor 6:4; 10:8; Col 4:10; 1 John 2:29.

<sup>33</sup>Examples: Matt 5:46; 21:3; 24:23; Mark 12:19; Luke 17:3 (contrast v. 4); John 8:36; 9:31; 12:24; 14:23; 1 Cor 8:10; Col 3:13; 1 John 2:1; 5:14.

<sup>34</sup>Examples: Matt 21:24; Mark 8:3; Luke 17:4 (cf. v 3); 22:67.

<sup>35</sup>Examples: Luke 16:31; John 7:51; 11:48; Acts 26:5; 1 Cor 13:1–3; 14:7, 8.

<sup>36</sup>Examples: Matt 24:48–51; 28:14; 1 Cor 14:28; 2 Cor 9:4.

<sup>37</sup>Examples: Matt 21:21, 25, 26; Mark 3:24, 25; 14:31; Luke 16:30; John 21:22; Rom 2:26; 1 Cor 4:15; 12:15; Gal 1:18.

Certain <i>not</i> to be fulfilled	7 <sup>38</sup>
No indication of probability	120 <sup>39</sup>

Several observations result from this study.

First, the first category above represents third class conditions which are used of future events which are absolutely certain of fulfillment, such as the lifting up of Christ on the cross (John 12:32), his return to heaven (John 14:3; 16:7), his second coming (1 John 2:28; 3:2), the multiplication of Israel as the sand of the sea (Rom 9:27), Paul's preaching the gospel (1 Cor 9:16), the perishing of our earthly house (2 Cor 5:1). The potentiality of such things is simple futurity; it has not happened yet. To use the word "probable" with such would be completely misleading. We could never understand Christ to say, "I probably will come again," and the third-class condition used does not in fact mean that.

Second, the seventh category above represents third-class conditions which are certain *not* to be fulfilled. Some are set in pairs as opposites to others in the "certain" category (John 16:7; 1 Cor 9:16). They include such totally impossible items as Christ not seeing what the Father does (John 5:19) or his saying he does not know the Father (John 8:55), or the apostasy not coming first (2 Thess 2:3), or man's keeping the law (Rom 2:25), or the sailors not remaining in the ship with resulting loss of life (Acts 27:31) after Paul has already assured them that God had promised all would be safe. Again, the element of contingency here is simple futurity, and the remarks in the preceeding paragraph are applicable here.

Third, the vast bulk of examples in the middle of the spectrum obviously fit the characterization of third-class conditions as doubtful, contingent, or potential, but they do not support the concept that *degree* of potentiality is involved. They range from probable to doubtful to improbable. They include what possibly might occur and what the mind can conceive as possible. It should be noted that all these "degree of probability" terms are derived from the *context*; they all are simple *ἐάν* + subjunctive conditions.

Fourth, the very large number of instances labeled as "No indication" (120 out of 277, or 42%) underscore the same conclusion. They are passages where even the context cannot tell the degree of probability. Often, opposite contingencies are listed, each using the

<sup>38</sup>All of the examples so classified have been listed in the discussion following.

<sup>39</sup>In addition to the examples given in the discussion, see: Matt 4:9; 18:13; 22:24; Luke 13:3, 5; John 6:44, 51; 7:17; 15:7; Rom 7:2-3; 13:4; 1 Cor 4:19; Heb 3:7; James 5:15; Rev 2:5.

same conditional form; you may forgive, or not forgive (Matt 6:14, 15), your eye may be single or evil (Matt 6:22, 23), the house you enter may be worthy or not worthy (Matt 10:13), your brother may hear you when you rebuke him, or he may not, or he may refuse to hear when you take another along, or he may refuse to hear the church (Matt 18:15–17), a man may walk in the day or in the night (John 11:9, 10), we may live or die, in either case we do so “unto the Lord” (Rom 14:8). More frequently they are single contingencies; a man may or may not “want to do His will” (John 7:17), it may be the Lord’s will or it may not (1 Cor 4:19; James 4:15; Heb 6:3), a virgin may marry or not (1 Cor 7:28), a man or a woman may have long hair or not (1 Cor 11:14, 5), the Thessalonians may, or may not, stand fast in the Lord (1 Thess 3:8). Clearly, degree of probability or potentiality is *not* in the third-class construction. If it is present at all it is in the context.

### *Comparison with Fourth-Class Conditions*

Such terms expressing comparison have their origin in the classical grammarians and refer to a comparison between two classes of future condition, those using  $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$  + subjunctive and those using  $\epsilon\iota$  + optative. W. W. Goodwin distinguished these as “Future More Vivid” and “Future Less Vivid.”<sup>40</sup> By vividness he did not mean more or less probable, but a greater or lesser distinctness and definiteness of concept. B. L. Gildersleeve, followed by Robertson and a host of NT grammarians, made mode rather than time the decisive factor in classification of conditional sentence and gave us the familiar “four class” terminology. Within this group, apparently, the more probable—less probable concept has grown.

It is usually not clearly recognized that this comparison, whatever its nature, referred to *classical* grammar, not to NT grammar. With no attempt to evaluate the propriety of this analysis for classical Greek, it should be noted that such can have no application to NT Greek, for the obvious reason that the NT has no fourth-class conditions.<sup>41</sup> As Robertson himself says, “It is an ornament of the

<sup>40</sup>W. W. Goodwin, *Greek Grammar*, rev. by C. B. Gulick (Boston: Ginn, 1930) 298.

<sup>41</sup>The correctness of this statement needs to be supported. There are 10 instances where  $\epsilon\iota$  appears with an optative verb, thus possibly a fourth class protasis. Of these, one is not conditional at all:  $\epsilon\iota$  is introducing an indirect question, “whether” (Acts 25:20; perhaps also 17:27). Five appear to be stereotyped, almost parenthetical expressions, the kind which might survive after the construction has become archaic ( $\epsilon\iota$  τύχοι, 1 Cor 14:10; 15:37;  $\epsilon\iota$  δύναιντο, Acts 27:12, 39;  $\epsilon\iota$  δύνατον εἶναι, Acts 20:16). The three remaining seem clearly to be fourth-class protases; one with an apodosis which is



cultured class and was little used by the masses save in a few set phrases. It is not strange, therefore, that no complete example of this fourth-class condition appears in the LXX, the NT or the papyri so far as examined. . . . No example of the opt. in both condition and conclusion in the current κοινή. In the modern Greek it has disappeared completely."<sup>42</sup> Now, if *all* future conditions in the NT are third class, that is, all are *more* probable, there is no longer any meaning to "more." "More probable" must be understood to mean "more probable than if he had used the optative," not "more likely than not." It seems much better to follow the suggestion of Duncan Gibbs, "that the ἔάν with the subjunctive has become merely a formula for presenting a future condition. Any suggestion of expectation of fulfillment which might have existed at one time (if ever it did) has now vanished. The condition is simply a large basket made to hold any future condition, likely or unlikely, possible or absurd."<sup>43</sup>

### *Comparison with εἰ + Future Indicative*

When we call this third class the Future Condition we do not mean that all conditions future in time belong to this class. In my previous study I discovered 14 examples of εἰ + future indicative in the protasis. These first-class conditions of course are also future in time reference. How do they relate to the third-class future conditions? The discussions of the grammarians reflect their own understanding of the basic significance of the two classes. Goodwin says, "The future indicative with εἰ is very often used in future conditions implying strong likelihood of fulfillment, especially in appeals to the feelings and in threats and warnings."<sup>44</sup> Smyth calls it the "Emotional Future Condition. . . . When the condition expresses a strong feeling, the future indicative with εἰ is generally used instead of ἔάν with the subjunctive. Such . . . commonly contain a warning or a threat or in general something undesirable."<sup>45</sup> Zerwick, who characterizes the first class as "the concrete case," says "εἰ with future (instead of ἔάν with

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in indirect discourse (Acts 24:19); the other two (1 Pet 3:14, 17) have apodoses in which the verb is left unexpressed. There is thus no complete example of the fourth-class condition.

It should be noted that the only optatives which are involved here are those with εἰ forming a protasis. Optatives occurring in so-called "implied apodoses" (without a protasis) are simple instances of the potential optative and are not conditional, except perhaps by implication.

<sup>42</sup>Robertson, *Grammar*, 1020–21.

<sup>43</sup>Duncan G. Gibbs, "The Third Class Condition in New Testament Usage" (Th. M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979) 51.

<sup>44</sup>Goodwin, *Grammar*, 298.

<sup>45</sup>H. W. Smyth, *A Greek Grammar* (New York: American Book Co., 1916) 346.

the subjunctive) is of course perfectly correct and classical, so long as the condition is to be represented as a concrete one."<sup>46</sup> Turner says, "This sometimes conveys the same idea but occurs very seldom in Ptol. pap. The feeling of definiteness and actual realization accompanies it. It is almost causal."<sup>47</sup> But after citing several examples he admits, "The difficulty about this view is 2 Tim 2:12 where the condition was surely conceived as no more than hypothetical." Robertson surprisingly says, "The kinship in origin and sense of the aorist subj. and fut. ind. makes the line a rather fine one between εἰ and the fut. ind. and εἰς and the subj."<sup>48</sup> If we understand the first class as being simple logical connection, as I have attempted to demonstrate earlier,<sup>49</sup> then εἰ with a future indicative indicates a simple logical connection in future time. If we accept the understanding of the third-class being presented in this paper, then εἰς with a subjunctive calls attention to some element of future contingency involved. The form used will depend on the purpose of the speaker or writer.

### Summary

What term can be used to express the essential meaning of the third class condition? Such terms as "probable," "likely," "expectancy," "anticipatory" are all misleading and not suitable. "Potential" or "contingent" are neutral terms which express well the meaning if properly understood. Zerwick, in the English translation, uses the term "eventual," apparently to refer to that which may eventualize or come to pass. The English dictionary gives that as a legitimate meaning for "eventual," but probably it is not normally understood in that sense by English readers. We come back to the term "Future Condition," which in my judgment is to be preferred.

### GENERAL VERSUS PARTICULAR

It has been broadly recognized that within this εἰς + subjunctive class there are two distinct<sup>50</sup> types of conditional statements. One

<sup>46</sup>M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, trans. by Joseph Smith (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963) 111.

<sup>47</sup>N. Turner, *Syntax*, 115.

<sup>48</sup>Robertson, *Grammar*, 1017.

<sup>49</sup>In the first article of this series, *GTJ* 2 (1981).

<sup>50</sup>One needs to take care not to overestimate this distinctness.

While semantically it is easy to see the distinction, yet in actual usage it often is not so obvious. The present writer has attempted to classify these third-class conditions in the NT between present-general and future-particular, on two occasions widely separated in time. The results were greatly divergent. And when these were compared

group expresses general or universal suppositions which, whenever they are fulfilled, bring the stated results. "If a kingdom is divided against itself it cannot stand" (Mark 3:24); "The law does not condemn if it does not first hear . . . and know. . . ." (John 7:51); "If anyone walks in the night he stumbles" (John 11:10). The other group speaks of particular, specific, future suppositions, such as, "Lord, if you will you can heal me" (Matt 8:2); "If someone should come to them from the dead, they will repent" (Luke 16:30); "If I send them away fasting they will faint in the way" (Mark 8:3). All these examples share in common the  $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$  + subjunctive form.

If it seems strange to us that such distinct types should be thrown together in one grammatical form it should alert us to the probability that we are not looking at it as the Greek writer did. Apparently he did not see these as diverse types; there must be some common characteristic which in his mind linked them in the same manner of expression. His choice to use the subjunctive points to the common element. They are both undetermined, contingent suppositions, future in time reference. Whether that potentiality was seen as some particular occurrence or one which would produce the result whenever it occurred was not the primary thought in the mind of the speaker. He used a form which in either case expressed the future eventuality.

Some grammarians do attempt to distinguish two separate classes. W. W. Goodwin notes that "the character of the apodosis distinguishes these future conditions from the present general supposition" and claims that the present general class uses a present indicative or its equivalent in the apodosis, while the future particular class has some future form.<sup>51</sup> Machen calls the  $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$  + subjunctive class "future conditions," but in a footnote he calls attention to the fact that this term takes no account of the large group of present general conditions which share the structural form.<sup>52</sup> Zerwick also distinguishes two classes, the "eventual" and the "universal," warning, however, that "the distinction between type C (eventual) and E (universal), though certain grammarians make it, is not a linguistic or grammatical one, but a purely extrinsic one based on subject matter (and an analysis according to the speech-habits of some other language than Greek)."<sup>53</sup>

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with the conclusions of another scholar an even wider difference was seen. It is not easy to decide whether "If anyone wants to do His will he shall know . . ." (John 7:17) or "If you love me you will keep my commandments" (John 14:17) is expressing a general truth always true, or is to be thought of as looking to some particular future situation. The distinction is highly subjective, as well as totally without indication in the language itself.

<sup>51</sup> Goodwin, *Grammar*, 298.

<sup>52</sup> Machen, *Greek for Beginners*, 132 n. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, 111.

The term "present general" commonly used for the universal condition is an unfortunate one, based probably on the claim by Goodwin quoted above that the apodosis is a present indicative or its equivalent. Elsewhere he speaks of this as a "quasi-present."<sup>54</sup> Zerwick uses still another limiting designation of this present, "a general (universal) condition in the (atemporal) present, referring to any case of the kind expressed."<sup>55</sup>

Thus Goodwin affirms and Zerwick denies that the form of the apodosis indicates the distinction between the general and the particular sub-classification of this third-class. Again, without presuming to evaluate the propriety of this as it applies to classical Greek, I have in this study attempted to check its validity for the NT. The present indicative occurs about 135 times in the apodoses of this class in the NT, 81 times (61%) in those which I have classified as general, 52 times (38%) in those classified as particular. The future indicative occurs 118 times, 18% in general examples, 82% in particular examples. While these may conform in a *majority* of cases with the proposed rule, yet 4 out of 10 or even 1 out of 5 is a high percent of error.

But the problem is even greater. The rule as stated spoke of "present indicative or its equivalent," and on the other hand "any future form." When we ask more specifically for the *time-reference* of the apodosis instead of the *tense form*, a very interesting factor appears: in almost every instance the time-reference is discovered to be future.

Let me illustrate and explain this conclusion. The apodosis uses the imperative mood 45 times (27 present, 15 aorist, 1 aorist subjunctive with μή as a prohibition). Also, in another example the apodosis is expressed by two participles which depend on an imperative verb and in another by an infinitive of indirect discourse representing an imperative in the direct. The imperative time-reference is clearly future. On 12 occasions οὐ μή + aorist subjunctive, a strong future denial, forms the apodosis. On 10 other times the aorist subjunctive is used when the apodosis is a purpose clause with ἵνα, etc. Once, the apodosis has πῶς with the deliberative subjunctive. Again, these are all future in time reference.

Next, examining the 81 examples of the present indicative in the apodoses of general suppositions, it is probable that even these represent future time. 20 of these seem to be gnomic or atemporal, which includes future time. But specifically in the apodosis of a

<sup>54</sup>W. W. Goodwin, "On the Classification of Conditional Sentences in Greek Syntax," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 4 (1873) 66.

<sup>55</sup>Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, 111.

contingent condition this present must be logically future to the fulfillment of the protasis. Two examples of these presents are "futuristic" ("I am coming," John 14:3; note that it is accompanied by a future tense verb in the same apodosis). Another 21 instances involve verbs which involve potential action looking forward to the future: "I am able to . . ." etc. Some 26 express what I choose to label "resulting action," what will happen or result when the protasis is realized: "even if someone strives he *is not crowned* if he does not strive lawfully" (2 Tim 2:5); "If we love one another God *abides* in us" (1 John 4:12); "If we ask anything . . . he *hears* us" (1 John 5:14). The remaining 55 present indicatives in apodoses express what I have called "discovered state," identifying the condition which will be discovered to be true when the condition is met: "If you abide in me you *are* truly my disciple" (John 8:31); "If I do not wash you, you *do not have* a part with me" (John 13:8); "If you release this man you *are* not a friend of Caesar" (John 19:12); "Circumcision *is* profitable if you keep the law" (Rom 2:25); "Woe *is* me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor 9:16); "If we walk in the light . . . we *have* fellowship . . ." (1 John 1:7).

The only apodosis verbs left to be considered are 7 aorist indicatives. These I would consider to be expressive of "discovered resulting action": "If he hears you, you *have gained* your brother" (Matt 18:15); "If anyone does not abide in me, he *has been cast out* and *has withered* . . ." (John 15:6); "If you marry you *have not sinned*" (1 Cor 7:28, twice); "If a man enter your assembly and you . . . , *have you not discriminated and become judges* . . . ?" (James 2:2-4).

It is not expected that everyone will agree with all of these explanations, but certainly it is clear that there is no discernible distinction in form in the NT Greek which will identify the two types of conditional statements within the third class. In fact, there is some future time-reference in all of the examples, even those which are often called present-general. The general-particular may be a valid distinction, but it depends on subject-matter and the interpretive exegesis of the commentator, not on the Greek text of the NT.





# BIBLICAL TEACHING ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

CHARLES C. RYRIE

*This survey of the biblical teaching on divorce and remarriage gives special attention to the meaning of the exception clause in Matthew and preference to the view that it refers to unlawful unions and therefore does not justify divorce for sexual immorality. Since only death, not divorce, breaks the one-flesh relationship, remarriage is permitted only after the death of a mate. Reconciliation is always the goal for those in a troubled marriage.*

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DIVORCE and remarriage are biblical doctrines, and like other doctrines must be formulated on the basis of sound exegesis and biblical theology. Sound exegesis furnishes the raw material, the data; biblical theology correlates the results of exegesis in relation to the progress of revelation. The result provides authoritative instruction for this crucial area of life today. Undebatable authoritative truth comes from revelation. Our experience cannot create it; it should conform to it; certainly it must never compromise it.

## I. THE TEACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

### A. *The Institution of Marriage (Gen 1:26-27; 2:18-25)*

#### 1. The Purpose of Marriage

Marriage was instituted in the context of creation, making it an ordinance that applies to all regardless of the presence or absence of faith. God's purposes in giving marriage to all mankind were (1) to supply the lack a man or woman has alone; (2) to encourage a faithful, monogamous relation for the fabric of society; and (3) to establish the one flesh relationship.

The first relates to the word "helper" in Gen 2:18. It simply means that each alone lacks what the mate can supply so that together they make a complete whole.

The second finds its basis in that God made only one wife for Adam and said that he should "cleave" to that wife (Gen 2:24). Cleaving carries with it the idea

. . . of clinging to someone in affection and loyalty. Man is to cleave to his wife (Gen 2:24). Ruth clave to Naomi (Ruth 1:14). The men of Judah clave to David their king during Sheba's rebellion (II Sam 20:2). Shechem loved Dinah and clave to her (Gen 34:3) and Solomon clave in love to his wives (I Kgs 11:2).

Most importantly, the Israelites are to cleave to the Lord in affection and loyalty (Deut 10:20; 11:22; 13:4 [H 5]; 30:20; Josh 22:5; 23:8) if his blessing is to be theirs. . . . In these verses parallel words and phrases that describe this proper attitude to the Lord are: fear, serve, love, obey, swear by his name, walk in his ways, and keep his commandments.<sup>1</sup>

The third, to provide the closest relationship, is the meaning of "one flesh." It not only involves physical union but also a unity of spiritual, moral, and intellectual facets of the husband and wife. Furthermore, "this union is of a totally different nature from that of parents and children; hence marriage between parents and children is entirely opposed to the ordinance of God."<sup>2</sup> Consequently, in the Mosaic legislation sexual relations, whether within or outside the marriage relationship, with close relatives were forbidden (Lev 18:6-18; cf. Deut 22:30; 27:20, 22-23).<sup>3</sup> These prohibitions were related not only to literal blood lines but also to "blood" relationships created through marriage (e.g., a brother's or uncle's wife). Marriage not only creates vertical blood relationships in the form of children, but also horizontal "blood" relationships between the couple themselves.<sup>4</sup> In short, "one flesh" is analogous to kinship.<sup>5</sup>

If these are God's purposes in marriage, then obviously they are thwarted by unfaithfulness, polygamy, and incestuous relationships.

## 2. The Elements of Marriage

Biblical marriage involves three elements. First, the consent of the partners and of the parents (Gen 21:21; 34:4-6; Judg 14:2-3; Josh

<sup>1</sup>Earl S. Kalland, s.v. "dābaq," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1980) I. 178; cf. Abel Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Testament: A Study With Special Reference to Mt. 19:13 [sic] - 12 and I. Cor. 11.3-16* (Lund: Gleerup, 1965) 19.

<sup>2</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.) I. 91.

<sup>3</sup>See also R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity, 1980) 186.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. G. J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 253-54.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry*, 20-21; Harrison, *Leviticus*, 186.

15:16; Eph 6:1-3; 1 Cor 7:37-38). Second, the public avowal which could include a marriage contract as well as legal and social customs (Gen 29:25; 34:12). Third, the physical consummation of the union which normally follows. That intercourse alone did not constitute a marriage is evident from the distinction throughout the Old Testament between a person's wife or wives and his concubines (Gen 22:24; Judg 8:30-31; 2 Sam 3:7; 5:13; 1 Kgs 11:3) and the sequence of events involved in Deut 22:28-29 (cf. Exod 22:16-17). The legal/contractual aspect was important and made the period of betrothal binding.

### 3. The Indissolubility of Marriage

As marriage was originally planned there was no provision for ending it except by death. This concept was behind the Lord's answer to the Pharisees in Matt 19:4-6 where he appeals to Gen 2:24 as the basis of his teaching that marriage is indissoluble.

#### *B. Divorce and Remarriage in the Mosaic Law*

##### 1. Divorce

The Mosaic Law nowhere provided for divorce, though people who lived during that period practiced it. The importance of this point cannot be overstressed, especially in light of statements by evangelicals who, after discussing Deut 24:1-3, note that "God permitted divorce within stringently defined limits."<sup>6</sup> In fact the passage only recognizes that divorce was being practiced, but it never prescribes it.<sup>7</sup>

Another passage, Deut 22:13-29, describes two circumstances where divorce is proscribed. One was the case where the husband "turned against" his wife and sought to justify a divorce by accusing her of premarital unchastity. Assuming that the charge was false, the verdict was clear: "And she shall remain his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days" (v 19; *NASB* is cited, unless indicated otherwise). Does this not say something important to the reason for divorce sometimes offered today, namely, that when love dies, the marriage dies and divorce is recommended?

The other circumstance involved intercourse with an unbetrothed virgin. In this instance the man was required to marry the girl and never to divorce her (v 29).

The betrothed couple were legally considered as husband and wife in most respects.

<sup>6</sup>Jay Adams, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible* (Phillipsburg, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980) 30.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry*, 21, 25.

At the betrothal, the bridegroom, personally or by deputy, handed to the bride a piece of money or a letter, it being expressly stated in each case that the man thereby espoused the woman. From the moment of betrothal both parties were regarded, and treated by law (as to inheritance, adultery, need of formal divorce), as if they had been actually married, except as regarded their living together."<sup>8</sup>

The story of Hosea and passages like Jer 3:1-8 are used by some to conclude that God Himself is a divorcee (having divorced Israel as Hosea did Gomer) and therefore divorce is sometimes justified.<sup>9</sup>

However, it is far from clear exegetically that Hosea divorced Gomer, so at best this would be a very insecure foundation on which to build a case for legitimate divorce. Dwight Small, who praised Adam's book, has listed ten reasons why it is not possible to conclude that Hosea divorced Gomer.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, it is even less tenable to conclude from the story of Hosea that God divorced Israel. The question of Isa 50:1 is either a rhetorical one presupposing a negative reply or it should be understood as an allegory like Jer 3:8. If these illustrations are pressed to make God a divorcee, then perhaps he was also a polygamist, since he married both Israel and Judah. Nor should such poetical and metaphorical language be pressed into the service of determining the exact meaning of *πορνεία* in legal passages in Matthew's gospel.<sup>11</sup>

The point is simply that the story of Hosea and its illustration of God's relation to Israel furnishes no secure basis for concluding that there are sometimes legitimate divorces.

## 2. Remarriage

Deut 24:1-4 has been used by evangelical Protestants to demonstrate that "the divorce permitted or tolerated under the Mosaic economy had the effect of dissolving the marriage bond," therefore, with reference to our Lord's teaching in Matt 5:32 and 19:9 "we should not expect that remarriage would be regarded as adultery."<sup>12</sup> In reality this is a misuse of the passage.

<sup>8</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1943) I. 354; cf. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel, Vol. 1: Social Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965) 36.

<sup>9</sup> Adams, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*, 56, 71-75.

<sup>10</sup> "The Prophet Hosea: God's Alternative to Divorce for the Reason of Infidelity," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 7 (1979) 133-40. See also Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman (*Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980] 124, 220-24) who defend the same conclusion.

<sup>11</sup> See Tim Crater, "Bill Gothard's View of the Exception Clause," *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 4:3 [1980] 5-12.

<sup>12</sup> John Murray, *Divorce* (Philadelphia: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1953) 41-42; cf. Guy Duty, *Divorce and Remarriage* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1967) 32-44.

First, notice that

... the legislation relates only to particular cases of remarriage; the protasis contains incidental information about marriage and divorce, but does not legislate on those matters. The verses do not institute divorce, but treat it as a practice already known, . . .<sup>13</sup>

The passage acknowledges the existence of the practice of divorce; it regards the second marriage of the divorced wife as legal; and it forbids the reinstitution of the first marriage even after the death or divorce of the second husband. In particular, it forbids the remarriage of the first husband on the ground that the one flesh bond with that first husband still exists, even though divorce has been effected. Thus the passage teaches exactly the opposite from what Murray claimed. The first marriage is not "dissolved"; otherwise, there would be no basis for prohibiting that remarriage.<sup>14</sup>

The indecency which caused the first husband to divorce his wife has been variously explained. It was not premarital unchastity, since the law specifically dealt with such cases (Deut 22:28-29). Likely it was something short of adultery. Isaksson suggests that it meant the voluntary or involuntary exposure of the wife's pudendum, which would arouse his loathing.<sup>15</sup> If the husband chose to divorce his wife, he had to forfeit the dowry and may also have had to pay her a kind of alimony.

Scholars are not agreed on the basis for the prohibition of remarrying the first wife. The suggestion that the entire law was to deter hasty divorces is unlikely. Financial considerations would probably do that. Others suggest that to reconstitute the first marriage would be a type of incest, on the basis of Gen 2:24 and Lev 18:6-18, because the one flesh relationship was never dissolved.<sup>16</sup> One thing is certain: Deut 24:1-4 does not teach a dissolution divorce that breaks the marriage bond as Murray and others have taught and then applied to the teaching of the NT in order to validate remarriage. In fact, the prohibition in v 4 is based on the enduring nature of the one flesh bond of the original marriage. Therefore, a woman cannot return to the first husband even if her second husband dies.

### 3. Intermarriage (Ezra 9-10; Neh 13:23-31; Mal 2:10-16)

The OT forbade intermarriage with pagan peoples on religious grounds so that Israel's covenant relation with Yahweh might remain

<sup>13</sup>Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 304-5.

<sup>14</sup>See G. J. Wenham, "The Restoration of Marriage Reconsidered [Deut 24:1-4]," *JJS* 30 (1979) 36-40 and *Third Way* 1:21 [November 3, 1977] 7-9.

<sup>15</sup>*Marriage and Ministry*, 26.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Wenham, "The Restoration of Marriage."

inviolable. Though only marriages with Canaanite women were explicitly forbidden (Deut 7:1-3), and although some like Joseph, Moses, Mahlon and Chilion did marry foreign wives, the prohibition included other non-Israelitish nations, to prevent idolatry (cf. 1 Kgs 16:31-34).

As a scribe Ezra not only knew of this prohibition but also of the existence of a divorce procedure which he used for these cases of intermarriage. He apparently looked on them as unreal marriages which ought to be nullified, and thought that the consequences of such actions were to be borne by the husbands and fathers who contracted the illicit relationships. As long ago as 1890 George Rawlinson observed: "Strictly speaking, he probably looked upon them as unreal marriages, and so as no better than ordinary illicit connections."<sup>17</sup> More recently Wenham wrote:

In Ezra's eyes this was not a question of breaking up legitimate marriages but of nullifying those which were contrary to the law. It was forbidden for them to marry the people of the land (Deuteronomy 7.3) and the most serious cases of unlawful unions could be punished by death of both parties, just like adulterers (Leviticus 20).<sup>18</sup>

But Ezra only demanded divorce, not death (cf. Num 25:6-15).

In order to marry foreign wives, some Israelites had divorced their Jewish wives, a sin Malachi severely denounced. "God hates divorce," he declared, and no exception was made for so-called legitimate divorces.<sup>19</sup> We do well to be reminded of what Malachi said divorce did, namely: (1) it broke fellowship, so that the Lord did not accept the offerings (Mal 2:13); (2) it broke the marriage covenant (v 14); (3) it violated God's original intention for marriage (v 15); (4) it incurred God's hatred (v 16).

In summary, the OT teaches that marriage should be (1) purposeful, (2) pure (free from incest and heathen entanglements), and (3) permanent. Divorce was practiced but not prescribed. It was proscribed in certain instances, as was the remarriage of a previously divorced partner. And God declared his hatred of divorce.

## II. THE TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Most agree that the NT permits divorce only in two instances: πορνεία (Matt 5:32; 19:9) and desertion by the unbelieving partner in a spiritually mixed marriage, the mixture having occurred after the marriage (1 Cor 7:15). These passages contain difficult problems,

<sup>17</sup> *Ezra and Nehemiah: Their Lives and Times* (New York: Randolph) 42.

<sup>18</sup> *Third Way* 1:21 (1977) 9.

<sup>19</sup> Despite Jay Adams's attempt to play down the absolute nature of this prohibition (*Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*, 23).



chiefly the meaning of *πορνεία* and the question of whether or not remarriage is permitted in either instance.

### A. *The Teaching of Christ*

#### 1. The Summary of His Teaching

When the apostle Paul summarized the Lord's teaching concerning divorce, he did not include any exception to the total prohibition of divorce by Christ (1 Cor 7:11). This seems to say that Christ taught the indissolubility of marriage and that whatever he meant by *πορνεία* was an uncommon meaning. Otherwise, Paul might have been expected to include a commonly understood exception to divorce in his summary.

Furthermore, no exception appears in Mark's (10:11-12) and Luke's (16:18) accounts of our Lord's teaching. Some have attempted to harmonize these accounts with Matthew's inclusion of an exception by saying that Mark and Luke state the general rule while Matthew added the exception (usually understood as sexual immorality).

However, the disciples' reaction to the Lord's teaching when the exception was included (Matt 19:10) was not the kind one would expect if they understood the exception to mean immorality in general, for they were greatly startled by his teaching. They evidently thought he was teaching the indissolubility of marriage so clearly that they suggested it might be wiser not to marry at all. In reply the Lord did not recommend celibacy as the better course of action, but the very fact that the disciples rejected (v 10) this conception of life and marriage shows that they understood his teaching to be different from what they knew in Judaism. And the Lord did not suggest that they had exaggerated or misunderstood his teaching.

Everything points to the exception being something uncommon, certainly nothing as common as adultery or immorality in general.

#### 2. The Background

The Hillel-Shammai debate was certainly in the minds of the Pharisees when they asked the Lord if a Jew could divorce his wife for any cause (Matt 19:3). The school of Hillel interpreted the words *עֲרֻת־דָּבָר* in Deut 24:1 more leniently by disjoining the words and making them read "uncleanness, or anything else." Naturally this interpretation, like the evangelical Protestant view today, enjoyed more popularity than that advanced by the more strict school of Shammai, which allowed divorce only for some immodesty, shamelessness, lewdness, or adultery. By asking the Lord to take sides on this question, the Pharisees hoped to lessen his popularity with the people, whichever side he took.

However, the Lord's response did not deal with the particulars of Deuteronomy 24 at all, but rather with God's original intention for marriage and with an action which would result in one or the other party being involved in committing adultery. The Pharisees were preoccupied with establishing grounds for divorce (and doing the same today is similar to Pharisaism); our Lord was concerned about the indissolubility of marriage.

### 3. The Interpretations of the Exception Clause

*a. The Patristic View.* This view states that when one party was guilty of πορνεία, usually understood to mean adultery, the other party was expected to separate but did not have the right to remarry. This was the view of all the Greek and Latin fathers, save one, in the first five centuries of the Church.<sup>20</sup> It has recently been defended by Protestant scholar G. J. Wenham.<sup>21</sup> In this he follows the three Catholic scholars, Henri Crouzel, Jacques Dupont<sup>22</sup> and Quentin Quesnell.<sup>23</sup>

This view understands marriage to unite both parties until the death of one. The fathers also denied the right to remarry to the Christian deserted by an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor 7:15-16). Ambrosiaster, who wrote between A.D. 366 and 383, was the only exception; he allowed remarriage to the "innocent" husband only and to the deserted believer. Today the Catholic view allows remarriage of the deserted believer.<sup>24</sup>

Quesnell, who is followed by most recent writers,<sup>25</sup> understands the eunuch-saying in v 12 to refer in context to the state of those named in v 9: those who, having put away their wives for πορνεία, would not be able to marry another without committing adultery. They have entered a state of "enforced celibacy" until the partner is reconciled.

<sup>20</sup>Henri Crouzel, *L'Eglise primitive face au divorce* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1971) and "Remarriage After Divorce in the Primitive Church: A Propos of a Recent Book," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 38 [1971] 21-41.

<sup>21</sup>*Third Way* 1:22 [November 17, 1977] 7-9; 1:25 [December 29, 1977] 17-18; 2:11 [June 1, 1978] 13-15; and "May Divorced Christians Remarry?" *Churchman* 95:2 [1981] 150-61.

<sup>22</sup>*Mariage et Divorce dans l'évangile. Matthieu 19, 3-12 et parallèles* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1959).

<sup>23</sup>"Made Themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven' (Mt 19.12)," *CBQ* 30 [1968] 335-58.

<sup>24</sup>Though for a Catholic who does not see that privilege in 1 Cor 7:15, see Pierre Dulau, "The Pauline Privilege," *CBQ* 13 [1951] 146-52; also R. L. Roberts, "The Meaning of *Chōrizō* and *Douloō* in 1 Corinthians 7:10-17," *Restoration Quarterly* 8 [1965] 179-84.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Wenham, "May Divorced Christians?" 161 n. 16, and G. Bromiley, *God and Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 40-41.

Very important in this view is that the exception clause qualifies only the verb ἀπολύω and not also the verb γαμέω in the protasis of the general condition in Matt 19:9. Thus, although divorce was permitted for a sexual sin, remarriage was not.<sup>26</sup> The fathers clearly understood that when the two events of the protasis occurred, namely, divorce followed by remarriage, then the consequences mentioned in the apodosis resulted, namely, the committing of adultery. This was also Augustine's understanding.<sup>27</sup>

While this writer does not agree with making πορνεία equal to adultery or any sexual sin, he does agree that the texts do not allow remarriage without committing adultery. This is very important to the current debate, for the construction of the Matthean texts applies the exception, whatever it means, only to divorce, and not to remarriage. Had the exception clause come after "marries another" it would have sanctioned remarriage, but it does not. Therefore, it is an assumption read into the texts to conclude that if there is legitimate ground for divorce then there is automatically permission for legitimate remarriage. Actually, the texts say that such remarriage involves adultery.

*b. The Evangelical Protestant View.* This view has two variations within it. Some, like Murray, understand πορνεία to be equivalent to μοιχεία.<sup>28</sup> Others give it a wider sense to cover a broad range of sexual sins. James B. Hurley understands it to mean illicit sexual relations which would have called for the death sentence in the OT: adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality.<sup>29</sup> Richard DeHaan includes premarital sex, incest, adultery, rabbinically unapproved marriage, homosexuality.<sup>30</sup> John MacArthur concludes that "fornication is the broad word for any kind of unlawful, shameful sexual activity."<sup>31</sup> All variations see the exception clause as qualifying both verbs (put away and [re]marry), thus permitting both divorce and remarriage in the case of πορνεία. Of course, divorce is not required, but it is permitted and so is remarriage. By this interpretation of πορνεία almost anyone could justify a divorce, especially if adultery is further defined as the Lord does in Matt 5:28.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Bromiley, *God and Marriage*, 45.

<sup>27</sup>"Adulterous Marriages," trans. by C. T. Huegelmeier, in *Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 27 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1955) 75-76.

<sup>28</sup>*Divorce*, 21.

<sup>29</sup>*Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1981) 103-4.

<sup>30</sup>*Marriage, Divorce, and Re-Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Radio Bible Class, 1979) 12; cf. Adams, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*, 54.

<sup>31</sup>Study notes on Tape 2220, p. 28.

To be sure, *πορνεία* does sometimes include adultery. But that does not indicate its meaning in these divorce texts, in a gospel that is concerned with legal niceties in which Matthew clearly distinguishes the two terms. This is evident in 15:19 where *πορνεία* and *μοιχεία* appear side by side. Indeed, Matthew uses *πορνεία* only in chaps. 5, 15, and 19 and *μοιχεία* in 15 where he distinguishes it from *πορνεία*. If he meant adultery in 5 and 19 why did he not use the clear word? The question is not, does *πορνεία* ever mean adultery, but does it always mean adultery? Lexical evidence does not require the meaning adultery in the divorce texts unless it can be proved (which it cannot) that the word always means adultery.

No reference in the NT equates *πορνεία* and *μοιχεία* as the proponents of this view require. The oft quoted reference of Sir 23:23 as an example of such an equation in pre-Christian Jewish literature is far from sure. J. Jensen, who has done the most scholarly word study in print on *πορνεία*, translates the passage "she has wantonly committed adultery."<sup>32</sup> Isaksson noted already in 1965 that *πορνεία* in Sir 23:23 most likely refers to the "sexual desire" that led the wife to commit adultery.<sup>33</sup> The same is true of *πορνεία* in *Herm. Man.* 4.1.3-8 and Tob 8:7.

Acts 15:20 and 29 furnish clear examples of *πορνεία* used in a restricted sense and certainly not as a broad word for any kind of unlawful sexual activity.

The letter of James to the local churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia forbids, in fact, four things proscribed by the Holiness Code of Lv 17-18, not only for "any man of the house of Israel" but also for "the strangers that sojourn among them". . . . These were the meat offered to idols (Lv 17:8-9), the eating of blood (Lv 17:10-12), the eating of strangled, i.e., not properly butchered, animals (Lv 17:15; cf. Ex 22:31), and intercourse with close kin (Lv 18:6-18).<sup>34</sup>

Here is a clear instance where *πορνεία* does not mean all kinds of unlawful sexual activity, but one kind only.<sup>35</sup>

The evangelical Protestant view is faced with another problem: the two different meanings simultaneously given to the verb ἀπολύω. Though this is not impossible, it is potentially confusing, especially when Matthew is so concerned with legal matters. First, divorce and remarriage is adultery where no instance of *πορνεία* is involved,

<sup>32</sup>"Does *Porneia* Mean Fornication? A Critique of Bruce Malina," *NovT* 20 [1978] 172f. He places Matt 5:32 and 19:9 in the category of forbidden marriages.

<sup>33</sup>*Marriage and Ministry*, 133.

<sup>34</sup>J. A. Fitzmyer, "The Matthean Divorce Texts and Some New Palestinian Evidence," *TS* 37 [1976] 209. Also H. J. Richards, "Christ on Divorce," *Scripture* 11 [1959] 29-30.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Bromiley, *God and Marriage*, 44-45.

implying that ἀπολύω does not terminate marriage. Second, where πορνεία is involved, Matthew must be using ἀπολύω with the meaning of divorce with the right to remarry because in the evangelical Protestant view the first marriage is terminated.

In summary, there appears to be three major problems with the evangelical Protestant view. First, it cannot substantiate equating πορνεία with μοιχεία.<sup>36</sup> Second, if it could, then it would not be able to account for the disciples' reaction in Matt 19:10. Third, the position of the exception clause in the protasis of Matt 19:9 does not lead to the conclusion that it modifies both verbs; therefore, even if divorce is permitted, remarriage is not. These last two matters are further complicated if one presses the dictionary definition of πορνεία into the context of Matt 19:3–12.

*c. The Betrothal View.* Few evangelicals realize that this view was the subject of a doctoral dissertation at the University of Uppsala in 1965.<sup>37</sup> The betrothal view builds on the fact that in Judaism a betrothed or engaged couple were considered "husband" and "wife."<sup>38</sup> Jewish betrothal was a legal contract which could only be broken by formal divorce or by death. If the betrothed proved unfaithful during the period of betrothal or was discovered on the first night not to be a virgin, then the contract could be broken. This is why Joseph was going to divorce Mary when he discovered that she was pregnant (Matt 1:19).

According to this view, then, πορνεία means premarital sexual intercourse (possibly John 8:41), and the exception then permits breaking the marriage contract with divorce when unfaithfulness is discovered during the betrothal period. The inclusion of the exception clause in Matthew's gospel only is explained as appropriate to the Jewish makeup of the audience that would have originally read the gospel. Isaksson points out that this is actually not a divorce, but "it was a matter of cancelling an unfulfilled contract of sale, because one of the parties had tricked the other as to the nature of the goods, when the price was fixed."<sup>39</sup> This was an exception Jesus had to make if he did not want to side with the swindler instead of the person swindled. Because the marriage would not have been consummated, if unfaithfulness was discovered during the year-long betrothal period, the man would be free to marry someone else.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup>See especially Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry*, 131–35.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Abel Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry*.

<sup>38</sup>Cf. Alfred Edersheim, *Life and Times*, I. 354 and G. Delling, "πάρθενος," *TDNT*, 5 [1967] 835 n. 59.

<sup>39</sup>*Marriage and Ministry*, 140.

<sup>40</sup>See James M. Boice, "The Biblical View of Divorce," *Eternity* (December, 1970) 19–21; and J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) 354–58.

This view is quite defensible and easily harmonizes with Paul's summary of the Lord's teaching in 1 Cor 7:10–11. No breakup of a marriage is permitted, though dissolving an engagement is, if fornication has occurred. Its weakness lies in the technical meaning given to πορνεία. πορνεία is nowhere else used in the restricted sense of "unchastity during the betrothal period."

*d. The Unlawful Marriage View.* This view, which is the most defended among scholars over all others, has three variations. The least popular form understands πορνεία to refer to marriages to non-Christians since it would be a form of spiritual idolatry and thus unlawful.<sup>41</sup> Another variation sees πορνεία as a reference to inter-marriage between a Jewish Christian and a gentile Christian. This could easily be the meaning in Acts 15:20 and 29 where Jewish Christians, still concerned with obeying the Mosaic law with its prohibition against marrying a gentile (Deut 7:1–3), would be greatly offended if this were happening even between believers of mixed racial backgrounds (cf. *Jub.* 30:7, 11).

More commonly, however, πορνεία is understood by those who hold this view to indicate unlawful incestuous marriages, i.e., marriages within the prohibited degrees of kinship proscribed in Lev 18:6–18. The proponents of this view see the restricted meaning of πορνεία in 1 Cor 5:1 and especially Acts 15:20 and 29 as the key to understanding its meaning in the Matthean exception clause.

This view was published by W. K. Lowther Clarke in 1929,<sup>42</sup> given preference by me in 1954<sup>43</sup> and more recently supported by F. F. Bruce.<sup>44</sup> Clarke's explanation of the view is this:

The Apostolic Decree of Acts xv. 29 promulgated a compromise. . . . Since the first three articles of the compromise are concerned with practices innocent enough to the Gentiles, the fourth must be of a similar nature. The passage in 1 Corinthians gives us the clue. *Porneia* here means *marriage within the prohibited Levitical degrees*. . . . [This] was a live issue, and *porneia* was the word by which it was known.

Turning to St. Matthew, the problem we have to account for is the obscuring of the plain rule of St. Mark by an exception which seems

<sup>41</sup>A. Mahoney, "A New Look at the Divorce Clauses in Mt 5,32 and 19,9," *CBQ* 30 [1968] 29–38.

<sup>42</sup>*New Testament Problems* (New York: Macmillan) 59–60.

<sup>43</sup>Published in 1958 in *The Place of Women in the Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1958) 43–48.

<sup>44</sup>*New Testament History* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969) 287. Also, R. Martin, "St. Matthew's Gospel in Recent Study," *Exp Tim* 80 [1969] 136; J. R. Mueller, "The Temple Scroll and the Gospel Divorce Texts," *RevQ* 38 [1980] 247–56; and many more.



inconsistent with the teaching of our Lord even in St. Matthew. If the foregoing argument holds, the reference is to the local Syrian problem. One exception is allowed to the universal rule: when a man who has married within the prohibited degrees puts away his wife the word adultery is out of place. Rather the marriage is null. . . .

. . . There is no divorce, but causes of nullity may be recognized.

In addition to this evidence from the NT itself for this particular meaning of *πορνεία*, Joseph Fitzmyer and James R. Mueller have shown from the Qumran literature that *זנות*, the Hebrew counterpart to *πορνεία*, was used in Palestine in the first century specifically of marriage within those prohibited relationships.<sup>45</sup> Thus it was a meaning known to the people of the time when our Lord spoke on divorce.

This view seems completely defensible. It does not share the weakness of the betrothal view in that *πορνεία* does have the meaning of incest in passages other than the debated ones both within and outside the NT. It also accounts for the reaction of the disciples and removes any contradiction with the other Gospel accounts and with 1 Cor 7:10–11.

### *B. The Teaching of Paul*

#### 1. Concerning Marriage (Rom 7:1–3)

In this passage Paul develops the concept that death releases the believer from his obligation to the law. He then illustrates this principle with marriage, stating that a woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives (and no exceptions). When and only when he dies is she released from the marriage relationship. If a woman is joined (that is, actual marriage, not illicit intercourse, since the same word is used in both parts of v 3) to another man while her husband is alive, she will be called an adulteress. A second marriage while the first mate is living is adultery.

#### 2. Concerning Divorce (1 Cor 7:10–16)

The main point of Paul's counsel is clear: maintain the marriage. If separation occurs (which Paul does not approve of), then only two options remain: remain unmarried or be reconciled to the original partner. In this advice Paul said he was following the teachings of Christ, and he did not mention any exception that would sanction divorce. This reinforces the view that "except for *πορνεία*" means something uncommon and more peculiar to a Jewish audience.

<sup>45</sup>Fitzmyer, "Matthaeian Divorce Texts," 213–21; cf. A. Stock, "Matthaeian Divorce Texts," *BTB* 8 [1978] 25–28.

In a spiritually mixed marriage Paul's counsel is the same: stay together. His reasons are: (1) for the sake of the family (v 14); (2) for the sake of peace (v 15); and (3) for the sake of personal testimony (v 16).

V 15 is understood in two entirely different ways. Some say that Paul permits remarriage if the unbelieving partner gets the divorce. Others insist he says nothing about the possibility of a second marriage for the deserted believer. The privilege to remarry is the so-called Pauline privilege of the Roman Catholic view, and the evangelical Protestant view agrees with it.<sup>46</sup>

Two things need to be noted. First, the departure of the unsaved spouse is not necessarily a divorce; it may only be a separation which would in no case leave the other party free to remarry.<sup>47</sup> Second, even if it does refer to a divorce initiated by the unsaved partner, Paul says nothing about a second marriage for the believer. Indeed, both vv 14 and 16 make it clear that remarriage is not the subject of v 15 at all. Paul does not introduce that subject until v 39. What is the bondage which the believer is not under? "All that οὐ δεδουλώται clearly means is that he or she need not feel so bound by Christ's prohibition of divorce as to be afraid to depart when the heathen partner insists on separation."<sup>48</sup>

Like the Lord, Paul disallowed divorce. He did recognize that the unbelieving partner in a spiritually mixed marriage might leave (and subsequently divorce) in which case the believer could not prevent it. But in no case was the believer free to remarry. The legal facet of any marriage may be dissolved, but the one flesh relationship and vows made to God do not become non-existent until the death of one of the partners.

Some attempt to justify the remarriage of divorced persons on a certain interpretation of 1 Cor 7:27-28.<sup>49</sup> It assumes that the phrase "released from a wife (γυναικός)" includes divorced from a wife.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup>See Duty, *Divorce and Remarriage*, 100. Unfortunately Duty, earlier in his work (p. 50) appealed to J. A. Bengel in support of his view that the exception clause qualifies both the divorce and remarriage under the circumstances given. Duty should have noted the brackets around the words that supported his view in the *Gnomen*: they signify that they are the comments not of Bengel, but the annotations of Steudel, the editor of the German edition of the *Gnomen*. If Duty would have looked at Bengel's comments at 1 Cor 7:15 he would have seen that Bengel apparently did not even allow the remarriage of the deserted believer.

<sup>47</sup>D. L. Dungan, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 96-99.

<sup>48</sup>A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *First Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914) 143.

<sup>49</sup>C. Brown, "chōrizō—Divorce, Separation and Remarriage," *NIDNTT* 3 (1978) 536-37.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. Duty, *Divorce and Remarriage*, 109.

However, in v 25 Paul introduces a new subject, signaling the same by using *περί δε* (cf. 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1); and the subject introduced is *τῶν παρθένων*, virgins, not divorcees.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, "released" appears in the perfect tense, referring not to freedom from marriage by divorce, but to a state of freedom, i.e., the single state.<sup>52</sup>

### 3. Concerning Remarriage

Since v 15 does not address the question of remarriage, and since v 27 refers to a single person (most likely an engaged couple, *τῶν παρθένων* being the only instance of the genitive plural in the NT, and *παρθένος* in the rest of the chapter refers only to women), the only time in 1 Corinthians 7 Paul deals with the question of remarriage is in v 39. The two restrictions he places on remarriage are (1) the death of the first mate (as also implied in Rom 7:1-3) and (2) the necessity of the new partner being a believer. Later Paul also urged younger widows to remarry (1 Tim 5:14).

### C. Summary

In summary, the NT presents a higher standard than the OT. It was our Lord who announced this superior standard by going further in his teaching than the strictest Jews of his day in that he disallowed divorce altogether. Although he did not blame Moses for allowing a bill of divorce, he replaced Jewish law with God's ideal state as announced before the fall of man.

The "exception clause" apparently concerns unlawful unions and is no license to justify divorce for sexual immorality. Even if immorality occurs, forgiveness and reconciliation are the goals, not divorce. Even if a legal divorce should occur, the "one flesh" relationship cannot be severed, and that is why remarriage is disallowed. Even separation, albeit temporary, is not approved, and if it happens, reconciliation is still the goal. Death of a partner alone breaks all that is involved in the "one flesh" relationship.

Paul's teaching is the same. Though recognizing that separations may occur, he does not approve of them, and certainly not of divorce. He included no exception for divorce when he summarized the Lord's teaching, and he only allowed for remarriage after the death of one partner.

The practical problems of applying this teaching must have been present in the first century as they are in ours. The scripture does not

<sup>51</sup>For the most satisfactory of the four views of what is taking place in 1 Cor. 7:25-38 see J. K. Elliott, "Paul's Teaching on Marriage in 1 Corinthians: Some Problems Considered," *NTS* 19 [1973] 219-25. Most writers now follow his leading.

<sup>52</sup>Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 153.

deal with all the cases that can arise, but it does give us the restrictions, the goals, and the reminder of the power of the Holy Spirit. If these were sufficient in those days, they are also sufficient for today.

Doctrine must never be compromised by cases; cases should always conform to doctrine. Let us obey God's word and never adjust it for immediate solutions. This is the only way for anyone to have fellowship and fulfillment according to God's standards. As Bromiley rightly says, people ". . . must be ready to obey God and not remarry after separation even though they might plead, as they often do, that they have a right to happiness or to the fulfillment of natural desires."<sup>53</sup>

Christian marriage is made an example in the NT of the relation between Christ and his Church. That great mystery is concretized in Christian marriage. Among other things, this surely means showing love, forgiving as often as necessary, and being faithful to the vow of commitment each made to the other until death separates.

<sup>53</sup> *God and Marriage*, 40-41.

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# THEOLOGY AND ART IN THE NARRATIVE OF THE AMMONITE WAR (2 SAMUEL 10-12)

JOHN I. LAWLOR

*The well known David/Bathsheba incident is examined in its broader narrative framework of 2 Sam 10:1-12:31. Much of the meaning and appreciation of the biblical account of that event is missed apart from its context. The larger Ammonite War narrative is a classic example of the masterful use of literary techniques by a biblical writer. It is not, however, "literary art for art's sake." The artistic presentation of the material greatly enhances the writer's perspective on the profound and vital theological issues at stake.*

\* \* \*

## INTRODUCTION

THE familiar narrative of David's adulterous involvement with Bathsheba and his subsequent confrontation by Nathan (2 Sam 11:1-12:25) is often cited as an example of James' model of "lust-sin-death" (James 1:14-15). To be sure, these elements are apparent in the David-Bathsheba narrative; but a careful scrutiny of the text indicates that there is much more. Initially, it is to be observed that the David-Bathsheba pericope is but part of a larger narrative unit. The Ammonite war is actually the narrative framework within which the David-Bathsheba incident is depicted. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the phrase *וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי־כֵן* ("Now it happened afterwards . . ." NASB) of 2 Sam 10:1 is precisely the same phrase that is found in 13:1 ("Now it was after this . . ." NASB);<sup>1</sup> thus 2 Sam 10:1-12:31 is to be treated as a narrative unit.<sup>2</sup> This fact might help shape the reader's perception of the events recorded in 11:1-12:25.

<sup>1</sup>For other occurrences of this phrase in 2 Sam see 1:1, 2:1, 8:1, 15:1.

<sup>2</sup>This narrative unit, in turn, is part of a still larger literary unit which is commonly known as the "Succession Narrative," 2 Sam 9-20. "In the Bible narratives which are more or less complete in themselves link up with one another so as to create larger

The intent of this study is not to present a verse-by-verse analysis; rather, the purpose is threefold: (1) to suggest a literary structure for these three chapters, (2) to investigate the narrative technique that has been employed, (3) to raise—and seek to probe—the question of “how the text has meaning.”

#### THE TEXT

The drama of the Ammonite War would appear to develop through a sequence of episodic units which progressively create tensions, ambiguities, and complications both for the characters in the drama as well as for the readers. A pivotal point seems to turn the flow of events around, resulting in the gradual resolution of the difficulties of the first half of the narrative.

#### 10:1–19

This first unit introduces the context of Israel's conflict with Ammon. Not only does this reappear toward the end of the narrative but it also provides the “subsurface” context in which David's sin (11:1) and Uriah's death (11:14–17) take place. The events leading up to the Ammonite conflict are sketched in 10:1–5. Nahash, the Ammonite king dies and his son, Hanun, takes the throne. By means of direct speech, the reader is informed of David's apparent intention to “deal kindly”<sup>3</sup> with Hanun; Davidic emissaries are then sent to offer condolences. Hanun's advisers question David's motives; perhaps the emissaries were actually sent to spy out the territory. At this point the reader is left to weigh the opposing claims of David (10:2) and the Ammonite princes (10:3). Hertzberg argues that some of David's earlier dealings might have provided adequate reason for the questioning of his motives.<sup>4</sup> At any rate, Hanun draws his own conclusions and publicly shames David's messengers.

The stage is now set for the first military encounter between Israel and the Ammonites, who have hired 33,000 Syrians to help them in this effort. Chapter 10:6–14 is characterized primarily by rapid action: David sends Joab and mighty men to the battle (10:7); the Ammonites and Syrians set their strategy (10:8); Joab perceives

literary units. In other words, narratives which on the one hand can be considered as self-contained units may be regarded on the other hand as parts of larger wholes.” Bar-Efrat, “Some Observations on the Analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative,” *VT* 30 (1980) 156.

<sup>3</sup>The term *ḥesed* appears here, suggesting the possibility of a treaty arrangement between David and Nahash, which David now intends to honor with Hanun.

<sup>4</sup>H. W. Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel*, trans. J. S. Bowden (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) 303.



the strategy of the enemy and lays his own (10:9–10). At this point the narrative slows down by recording the direct speech of Joab (10:11–12). The speech is important for two reasons: first, the reader has the opportunity to focus momentarily on the character of Joab through what he says, and second, his concluding remark, “. . . may YHWH do what seems good to him,” provides the only reference to YHWH in the narrative up to the pivotal point alluded to above. This latter point seems rather significant and will be raised again. The narrator then reports that Joab and his army were momentarily successful against the Syrians and Ammonites, for they fled before Israel (10:13–14). The text does not indicate that the Syrians and Ammonites were sorely defeated; they fled. Actual military defeat is not seen until the final unit of the entire narrative. The text is explicit in reporting the fact that Joab returned to Jerusalem following this encounter.

Chapter 10:15–19 records David's defeat of the Syrian attempt to “regroup.” Smith observes that the paragraph “. . . breaks the sequence of the narrative. . . .”<sup>5</sup> If, however, as Childs would argue, the present shape of the narrative has its own integrity,<sup>6</sup> then the reader is obligated to inquire concerning the function of this short scene. Two points may be mentioned: first, David's defeat of the Syrians explains why the Ammonites have no help when Israel inflicts the final blow at the conclusion of the narrative. The second, and perhaps the more important point, is that it sets up a marked contrast in David, who is here seen to be leading his own army, while in the next episodic unit he is seen to remain in Jerusalem.

### 11:1–5

This second major episodic unit is characterized by rapidity of action. In three short verses (3–5) Bathsheba's status moves from “wife of Uriah” to “pregnant by David.” Perhaps more intriguing, however, are the ambiguities of character which are created primarily by the narrator.

Quite noticeable is the repetitious use of the term שָׁלַח (“to send”) in four of these five verses (1, 3–5). This constitutes a continuation of a pattern established in the previous unit where the term appears eight times.<sup>7</sup> Altogether, the term is used 23 times in the narrative of the Ammonite war alone, while in the Succession Narrative of chaps.

<sup>5</sup>H. P. Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1904) 315.

<sup>6</sup>B. S. Childs, “On Reading the Elijah Narratives,” *Int* 34 (1980) 134.

<sup>7</sup>10:2; 10:3 (2x); 10:4; 10:5; 10:6; 10:7; 10:16.

9–20 it is used a total of 44 times.<sup>8</sup> The use of this term in these chapters, with a concentrated use in chaps. 10–12, provide an excellent example of Alter's category of *Leitwort*.<sup>9</sup> Further significance might be seen in the fact that eleven times David is the one who "sends," and twice he issues orders "to send."<sup>10</sup>

What is the significance of such a concentrated use of this term? One is tempted to see in this a conscious development of a power motif. David the king asserts his authority, "sending" people to do his bidding; he "sends" word here and there; he "sends" for Bathsheba. Joab, David's commander, "sends" messengers and messages. Ultimately, YHWH Himself "sends" his word to David by the prophet Nathan. This would seem to correlate with the broader context in which this narrative is set, that is, the Succession Narrative. Referring to the repetitious use of this term, Simon remarks, "In this way the narrator conveys the strength of David's position. . . ."<sup>11</sup>

What is the reader to make of the two narrative notations found in 11:1: "In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle . . ." and "But David remained at Jerusalem." Some observers are wont to gloss over these statements.<sup>12</sup> Once again, however, the reader must weigh the narrative intention behind such remarks. As noted above, the preceding scene describes David's leading the army of Israel against the Syrians. Immediately, then, the narrator turns to a time when kings normally go out to battle. It would have been sufficient for the narrator to record the fact that David "sent" Joab against the Ammonites in the spring of the year. Instead, he consciously informs the reader that David remained in Jerusalem at a time when normally he would be involved in military activity. Alter refers to the opening line of chapter 11 as ". . . a brilliant transitional device."<sup>13</sup> He explains his evaluation when he observes that "It firmly ties in the story of David as adulterer and murderer with the large national-historical perspective of the preceding chronicle."<sup>14</sup> This writer would add that its brilliance is also demonstrated by the subtle, rather ambiguous manner in which it raises the question of David's character, a question which then becomes the very focus of the narrative.

<sup>8</sup>G. Lisowsky, *Konkordanz zum Hebräischen Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibleanstalt, 1958) 1438–43. Perhaps it should also be pointed out here that the term is used only 9 times in 2 Samuel 1–8 and only 4 times in 2 Samuel 21–24. This clearly focuses attention upon the concentrated use of the term in 2 Samuel 9–20.

<sup>9</sup>R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981) 95.

<sup>10</sup>Joab is the subject of the verb 4 times; YHWH is the subject of the verb twice.

<sup>11</sup>U. Simon, "The Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb," *Bib* 48 (1967) 209.

<sup>12</sup>Smith, *Books of Samuel*, 317.

<sup>13</sup>Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 76.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

One further issue that deserves comment is the narrator's treatment of Bathsheba. Hertzberg raises the possibility of "... feminine flirtation ..."<sup>15</sup> on Bathsheba's part and suggests that she perhaps anticipated the potential of being seen.<sup>16</sup> What is fascinating about his treatment of the question is the fact that after raising all these "possibilities" he concludes that "... all this is unimportant for the biblical narrator."<sup>17</sup> Perhaps his last observation is the most perceptive, for the narrative avoids focusing on her thoughts, feelings, actions and words for the most part. Her only words in the entire narrative are found in v 5: "I am with child." The relative silence of the text concerning Bathsheba may very well be the narrator's way of keeping the reader's attention on the primary character in this scene.

### 11:6-13

The narrative context is set in 10:1-19 while 11:1-5 quickly relates the circumstances which lead to the artistic account of David's attempt to deceive Uriah in the present scene. The only recorded speech of Bathsheba, brief though it is, sets in motion a course of action which ultimately results in her husband's death.

From a literary point of view, this scene is, according to Alter's definition, a "proper narrative event:"

A proper narrative event occurs when the narrative tempo slows down enough for us to discriminate a particular scene; to have the illusion of the scene's "presence" as it unfolds; to be able to imagine the interaction of personages ... together with the freight of motivations, ulterior aims, character traits, political, social, or religious constraints, moral and theological meanings, borne by their speech, gestures, and acts.<sup>18</sup>

The narrative blending of action and dialogue is noteworthy as it builds tension, moves toward crisis, characterizes David and Uriah, as well as in its effecting reader participation in the flow of events. All this is initiated by the narrator's particularly concentrated use of his *Leitwort* שָׁלַח. Three times in 11:6 the term appears. Thus Uriah becomes the unsuspecting victim of the king's pressure and power, as David attempts to conceal his wrongdoing.

While the Davidic pretext of concern over the progress of the war and the welfare of the troops seems obvious to most readers, it should be noted that the narrator places the reader in the position of having to "weigh claims" at this point. That is to say, direct speech by

<sup>15</sup>Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel*, 309.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 310.

<sup>18</sup>Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 65.

the two main characters in the scene is the most explicit device employed at this point, a device which does not result in certainty for the reader.<sup>19</sup>

David the king of Israel and Uriah the Hittite provide an interesting and rewarding study in contrast here. David the king of Israel is selfish. While his army is engaged in warfare in Ammon, he is home satisfying himself with another man's wife. Uriah the Hittite, on the other hand, is selfless. When summoned by the king and given the opportunity to enjoy rest and relaxation at home with his wife he refuses. David, the king of Israel, is cunning and deceptive. If he can entice Uriah into cooperating, he might extricate himself from a situation which, if exposed, could lead to his death (Lev 20:10). Uriah the Hittite, on the other hand is unsuspecting.<sup>20</sup> Yet it is this very virtue which eventuates in his death! David the king of Israel is characterized by infidelity and disloyalty. He has wilfully become involved in an adulterous relationship with the wife of one of his warriors; he has indulged in the pleasures of home which his warriors have denied themselves for the cause of Israel. Uriah the Hittite, on the other hand, is marked by fidelity to the king, his commander-in-chief, and loyalty to the cause of Israel.

Uriah's character is especially evident in his direct speech of 11:11. When asked by David why he had not gone to his home the night before, at the king's urging, he replies:

The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.

A straightforward consciousness of duty and priorities is expressed in this response. Furthermore, if David had been truly attentive to Uriah's words, he might have been pricked in his conscience. It is to be noted also that this speech of Uriah becomes important later in the narrative when Nathan confronts the king with a parable.

The reader, aware of David's plight, senses the growing frustration of the king as he unsuccessfully attempts to cajole Uriah into providing him, unknowingly, with a means of escape from a most difficult

<sup>19</sup>See Alter's discussion of a "scale of means" by which characterization takes place; *Ibid.*, 116ff.

<sup>20</sup>Hertzberg (p. 310) argues that because of court gossip, etc., it is likely that Uriah knew that something was awry and that in this scene he consciously thwarts the king's plan. If this is so, it cannot be established on the basis of the narrative itself—only speculation. If one wants to speculate, it would seem reasonable to assume that if he did suspect something he would not have delivered the letter containing his execution notice. The narrative taken at face value makes better sense.

situation. At the same time, the reader quickly develops a healthy respect for this Hittite warrior.

### 11:14-27a

As David's ruthless scheme to rid himself of this "all too loyal soldier" develops in this next episodic unit, the plot becomes more complicated. The adultery and deception of the previous units lead to further, but this time lethal, deception here, as several Israelites are slain in the effort to accomplish the death of Uriah. As this part of the narrative progresses to crisis proportions, David's absolute callousness becomes apparent.

Even in his resolve to dispatch Uriah,<sup>21</sup> David attempts to make the setting appear as natural as possible, for he arranges for Uriah's death to occur in the context of battle. Perhaps a touch of irony is evident here in that the very loyalty which first frustrates the king's purpose becomes the tool that is used to bring about the loyal soldier's death. As a matter of fact, David misuses the loyalty in two ways: first, the letter containing the details of David's plan is carried by Uriah—an indication that the king was using this quality of Uriah to his own advantage; second, the scheme, briefly outlined though it is, suggests that David believed that Uriah's character would lead him to remain on the front line even though his fellow soldiers retreated. This grotesque "use"/misuse of loyalty is also evident with respect to Joab, although it takes a different form. Aware of his commander's loyalty to the king, David is certain Joab will carry out his orders, regardless of the morality/immorality of them.

The narrator has effectively drawn the reader's attention to this issue. The one whose apparent attempt to show loyalty to the new king of Ammon was rebuffed (10:1-3)—an event which leads to the development of the present circumstances—is deeply enmeshed in a desperate scheme, the success of which depends upon the unsuspecting loyalty of one and the misdirected loyalty of another. The "uninformed loyalty" of Uriah is a more genuine loyalty, even though it is used by David and leads to his death. The "informed loyalty" of Joab is political and is used by David in an effort to avoid his own death. David's total insensitivity reaches a climax when he learns of the death of several warriors, including Uriah: "Thus you shall say to Joab, 'Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours now one and now another' . . ." (11:25).

<sup>21</sup> Miscall draws attention to the fact that "The narrative slows down through the use of detail and repetition allowing us, as readers, to consider alternatives, to create counter-texts, and to thereby better realize David's singlemindedness, his lack of consideration of alternatives." Miscall, "Literary Unity in Old Testament Narrative," *Semeia* 15 (1979) 40.

The narrator's technique in this scene is once again dominated by the reporting of action and dialogue; however, two additional techniques are employed effectively: internal speech (11:20-21) and repetition (11:15-17, 22-24). The example of interior speech in this case is Joab's anticipation of what David will *say* when he learns that the plan was not carried out in the manner David had described, and it is combined with Joab's anticipation of the king's *reaction*. His anticipation of the wrath of the king and words of the king combine to indicate a rather intimate knowledge of David on his part.<sup>22</sup> This, in turn, adds to the characterization of David which is developed by the narrator.

The scene closes with David taking Bathsheba as his wife after her days of mourning for her slain husband. The text again indicates that David "sent" (שלח) for Bathsheba (cf. 11:4); but it is non-committal with respect to his motives, as well as her thoughts and feelings. It would appear on the surface as though David believes the issue has been resolved. The woman whom he desired and cohabited with illicitly has now become his wife, and the narrator reports that the child conceived in this adulterous relationship is born.

#### 11:27b

While the final statement of chapter 11 does not constitute an episodic unit, it receives particular attention here because of its pivotal location and function. The narrative up to this point has steadily moved toward crisis and it is interesting and perhaps significant that YHWH is noticeably absent from the narrative except for Joab's reference to him in the context of Israel's encounter with Ammon and Syria (11:12). The reader is left to wonder what else David's involvement with Bathsheba and the attempt to cover it up might lead to, should secrecy be further threatened. Thus this very important statement turns the entire narrative around: "But the thing that David did was evil in the eyes of YHWH." Immediately the reader is "put on notice" that David is not going to "get away with" this. The initial deed and the subsequent events have not escaped the eye of YHWH. This creates anticipation within the reader, as he waits for the resolution of the situation. Divine activity now becomes very evident. The next statement of the narrative, in fact, indicates that YHWH "sends" (שלח) Nathan to David! Furthermore, YHWH's presence now becomes very apparent, for the Tetragrammaton appears thirteen times in chap. 12.

<sup>22</sup>Smith says that this "... reflects the opinion of the narrator rather than that of Joab or of David," *Books of Samuel*, 319.



## 12:1-6

This episodic unit presenting Nathan's parable and David's response confirms the direction which 11:27b apparently gives to the narrative. YHWH's "sending" the prophet to David signals the divine intention to pursue the situation to a resolution. The parable itself is artfully contrived and gives evidence of having been deliberately designed to communicate a message and to effect a particular response from the recipient. Simon argues that the parable is to be seen as an example of the genre of "juridical parable."<sup>23</sup>

One of the more important features about the parable is the fact that it parallels the situation which gave rise to its telling, yet that parallel is not so obvious to the recipient that it reveals its point.<sup>24</sup> Simon refers to it as a "veil of concealment."<sup>25</sup> An illustration of this point is seen in the terminology which Nathan uses in 12:3 where he indicates that the ewe lamb "... used to eat (תֹאכַל) of his morsel, and drink (תִּשְׁתֶּה) from his cup, and lie (תִּשְׁכַּב) in his bosom. . . ." The significance of this is to be seen in the similarity of this statement to Uriah's statement, recorded in 11:11, when in response to David's query as to why he would not go to his home, he responds: "... shall I then go to my house, to eat (לֶאֱכַל) and to drink, (וְלִשְׁתּוֹת) and to lie (וְלִשְׁכַּב) with my wife. . . ."

The parable also has been constructed and is told in such a manner as to elicit a specific response from its recipient. Gunn points out that, "If the addressee were to give the wrong answer to the parable . . . the parable would be ludicrously pointless."<sup>26</sup> David's initial response ("... As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die . . ."), however, is the expected response and leaves David vulnerable.

Rather lengthy discussions have been carried on concerning what/who the various elements of the parable "stand for." It would seem more appropriate to talk in terms of "the point of the parable." The key appears in 12:4 where we read that the rich man was "... unwilling (וַיִּמָּצֵל) to take one of his own flock or herd . . ." and 12:6 where David says that the rich man should make four-fold restoration "... because he did this thing and because he had no pity

<sup>23</sup>See discussions in U. Simon, "Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb," pp. 220ff. Gunn responds: "Now if Simon really is suggesting . . . that this is a 'literary genre' with a primary connection with a 'legal' setting of kings and 'judges at the gates,' then one must observe that as such it can hardly have enjoyed much of a vogue." Gunn, "Traditional Composition in the 'Succession Narrative,'" *VT* 26 (1976) 218.

<sup>24</sup>Gunn, "Traditional Composition," 219.

<sup>25</sup>Simon, "Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb," 229.

<sup>26</sup>Gunn, "Traditional Composition," 219.

(לִּטְטֹל).” David’s anger appears to have been aroused by the callousness of the rich man. The callousness was clearly demonstrated by the rich man’s slaying the poor man’s ewe lamb. Herein, then, lies the point of the parable and when David demonstrates anger over the callousness of the rich man, he is, in effect, demonstrating anger over his own callousness.

From the narrative point of view, this episodic unit balances out the episodic unit immediately preceding 11:27b, 11:14–27a. David’s own callousness is clearly manifested both through the scheme to rid himself of Uriah and his response when learning of the death of several Israelite warriors, including Uriah (11:25). As Simon remarks:

The king who was usually so sparing over the lives of his men, and whose anger at reports of unnecessary loss of life struck fear into his generals, assumed a mantle of indifference when he learnt that amongst the fallen was also the husband of Bathsheba.<sup>27</sup>

### 12:7–15a

An outstanding characteristic of this episodic unit is its domination by dialogue. The entire block of material is devoted to dialogue with the exception of the narrator’s report that “Nathan went to his house” (12:15a). Of further interest is the fact that of all the words spoken in this scene only two are spoken by David: *הִטָּאתִי לַיהוָה* (“I have sinned against YHWH.”). Twice in Nathan’s speech the addressee and the reader are reminded that these words are actually the words of YHWH (12:7, 11). This literary unit provides the reader with a good example of the narrative techniques of “contrastive dialogue.”<sup>28</sup>

The message of YHWH is divided into two parts. The first, 12:7–10, begins by reminding David of what YHWH has done for him (12:8–9a) and then moves to reminding David of what he had done against Uriah and ultimately YHWH himself (12:9b–10). That an emphasis is placed upon David’s unacceptable conduct toward Uriah is evident in two ways. First, Nathan reminds David twice of the fact that he is guilty of slaying Uriah “with the sword.” Second, Nathan twice rehearses David’s action of “. . . taking his/Uriah’s wife to be your wife.” Nevertheless, the promise that “the sword” would be an ever-present factor in his house is directly linked to David’s “despising” (*בָּזָה*) the word of YHWH (12:9) and YHWH himself (12:10).

The second part of YHWH’s message (12:11–12) focuses upon the clandestine nature of David’s involvement with Bathsheba. Because

<sup>27</sup>Simon, “Poor Man’s Ewe-Lamb,” 231–32.

<sup>28</sup>Alter defines this as, “. . . to juxtapose some form of very brief statement with some form of verbosity.” *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 72–73.

of David's elaborate attempts to maintain the secrecy of the matter, his own wives would publicly be shamed by relative and neighbor.<sup>29</sup> In this way, therefore, the divine message of this episodic unit reverses the Davidic action which characterized 11:6–13. YHWH's words, "I will take your wives . . ." (לָקַח) are reminiscent of David's action of "taking" (לָקַח) Bathsheba (cf. 12:11 with 11:4; 12:9, 10).

David's two-word response is simple but powerful. Gunn observes that, "the stunning simplicity of David's response to Nathan . . . functions powerfully to reinstate him in the reader's estimation. . . ."<sup>30</sup> Nathan, at this point, announces to the king that YHWH has put away his sin and that he shall not die. Thus the king's self-pronounced judgment (12:5) is reversed by YHWH. The child, however, would die.

### 12:15b–25

The focus of attention in this seventh episodic unit is upon David and the child with an emphasis upon the former. The scene takes the reader from David's seven-day vigil for the ill child to his seeming lack of grief following the death of the child. The portion of the narrative devoted to David's vigil moves at a much slower pace than that which tells of David's activities following the death of the child. In "rapid-fire" style, v 20 reports that David "arose" (וַיָּקָם), "washed" (וַיִּרְחַץ), "anointed" (וַיִּסֶּךְ), "put on" (וַיַּחְלֶף), "went" (וַיֵּבֶא), "worshipped" (וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה), "went" (וַיֵּבֶא), "asked" (וַיִּשְׁאַל), and "ate" (וַיֹּאכַל)." This sudden change of behavior was noticeable even to his servants (12:21).

This unit ends with the conception and birth of a second, legitimate child named "Solomon" of whom it is said that "YHWH loves him" (12:24). This is the second occurrence in the narrative of the narrator reporting "inside information" with respect to divine feelings/responses (cf. 11:27b). Brueggemann suggests that this is evidence of "the Yahwistic underpinning of this political history. . . ."<sup>31</sup>

Two other comments from the narrator in this section deserve attention. In 12:15b Bathsheba is referred to as "Uriah's wife"—this in spite of the fact that she has become the wife of David by this point. At the conclusion of this portion of the narrative she is spoken of as "his/David's wife." This seems to serve as a connection to 11:1–5 where she begins as the wife of Uriah yet ends up pregnant by David. In 11:1–5 Bathsheba conceives David's child while she is

<sup>29</sup>Cf. 2 Sam 16:20–23.

<sup>30</sup>D. M. Gunn, "David and the Gift of the Kingdom (2 Sam. 2–4, 9–20, 1 Kings 1–2)," *Semeia* 3 (1975) 20.

<sup>31</sup>W. Brueggemann, "On Trust and Freedom: A Study of Faith in the Succession Narrative," *Int* 26 (1972) 9.

Uriah's wife; in 12:15b-25 while the child is yet alive she is referred to as "Uriah's wife." After the death of the child, Bathsheba, now spoken of as "David's wife," conceives another child by David. Roth notes that the narrative involving David and Bathsheba "... begins with David desiring Bathsheba and ends in David having Bathsheba as wife who bears the son."<sup>32</sup> This portion of the narrative thus provides a resolution to the complication of 11:1-5.

### 12:26-31

With the solutions to the problems created by the David/Bathsheba incident finally worked through, the narrator now returns to the broader framework of the Ammonite war. Joab has fought against the Ammonite royal city and has subdued it; now he sends (נִלְחָם) word to David inviting him to come and deal the death blow to the Ammonite insurrection.<sup>33</sup>

This second part of the narrative dealing with the Ammonite war also brings to a final resolution the problem which initiated the entire narrative. In 10:1-19 Ammon revolts against Israel. While Joab gains some sort of victory, the fact that in 11:1 David must send Joab against her sufficiently demonstrates the temporary nature of that victory. However, in 12:26-31 partial victory becomes total victory.

### CONCLUSION

The narrative of the Ammonite war is a fascinating study in divine resolution of a complex set of circumstances created by human greed, lust, deception and indifference. Furthermore, it is a fine example of narrative artistry. It is characterized by concentricity<sup>34</sup> and symmetry. This writer suggests the following chiastic symmetry for the narrative:

<sup>32</sup>W. Roth, "You are the Man! Structural Interaction in 2 Samuel 10-12," *Semeia* 8 (1977) 5.

<sup>33</sup>This raises a question as to whether Joab's involvement with the Ammonites lasted all the time covered by the events of 2 Samuel 11-12, a period of at least 2 years; or might this be an example of deliberate narrative framing without concern for linear chronology/sequence?

<sup>34</sup>Roth, "You are the Man!" 4-5.

- 10:1-19    A    Ammonite War: Revolt by Ammon, only partial victory by Israel
- 11:1-5        B    David and Bathsheba: She begins as "Uriah's wife," becomes pregnant by David
- 11:6-13        C    David and Uriah: David attempts to conceal his sin by deception of Uriah
- 11:14-27a      D    David arranges for Uriah's death, demonstrating his callousness
- 11:27b                *"But the thing which David had done was evil in the eyes of YHWH."*
- 12:1-6        D    Nathan's parable: exposing David's callousness
- 12:7-15a        C    Nathan's dialogue of "Thus saith YHWH": David's attempt to conceal his wrongdoing will result in the public shame of his own wives
- 12:15b-25      B    David's vigil: Bathsheba called "Uriah's wife" while child is alive; spoken of as "David's wife" after death of child; conceives legitimate son by David; one whom "YHWH loves"
- 12:26-31    A    Ammonite War: Israel's complete victory over Ammon





# THE INERRANCY DEBATE AND THE USE OF SCRIPTURE IN COUNSELING

EDWARD E. HINDSON

*In attempting to side-step the crucial implications of the current inerrancy debate, many evangelicals have tried to suggest that the controversy is nothing more than a semantical battle of terminologies and definitions. In this article, the inerrancy debate is viewed as it affects the role of pastoral counseling. In particular, the author examines the issues of "Christian" feminism and homosexuality, concluding that a weak view of the Scripture will always lead to a weak view of morality. Serious problems result from allowing cultural hermeneutics to redefine clear biblical revelation.*

\* \* \*

THE vast majority of Fundamentalists and Evangelicals alike hold to a belief in the inerrancy of the Scriptures in their original autographs as the proper view of biblical inspiration.<sup>1</sup> Most conservatives base their position on the teaching of the Scripture itself and trace the formulation of the plenary-verbal inspiration concept to the crystalization of that position by Warfield and the Princeton theologians of the nineteenth century. To Fundamentalists, the inerrancy of Scripture is ultimately linked to the legitimacy and authority of the

<sup>1</sup>For apologetic expositions of Biblical inerrancy see S. Custer, *Does Inspiration Demand Inerrancy?* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, n.d.); N. Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979); J. Gerstner, *A Bible Inerrancy Primer* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1965); C. Henry, ed., *Revelation and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), and *God, Revelation and Authority*, 4 vols. (Waco: Word Books, 1976); R. Lightner, *The Saviour and the Scriptures: A Case for Biblical Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978); J. W. Montgomery ed., *God's Inerrant Word* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974); J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958); C. Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971), and *A Defense of Biblical Infallibility* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1975); J. R. Rice, *The Bible: Our God-breathed Book* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord, 1969); J. Walvoord, ed., *Inspiration and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); E. J. Young, *Thy Word is Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963).

Bible.<sup>2</sup> We view the Bible as being God-breathed and thus free from error in all its statements and affirmations. However, today there is a debate raging within Evangelical circles regarding the total inerrancy of the Scriptures.<sup>3</sup>

# I. THE INERRANCY DEBATE

The recent and explosive evaluation of the left-wing Evangelical capitulation to limited errancy by Harold Lindsell has raised strong objections to the drift away from inerrancy by many whose historical roots go back to the birth of Fundamentalism.<sup>4</sup> In commenting on this drift within Evangelicalism from another perspective, Richard Quebedeaux observes that the old concepts of infallibility and inerrancy are being reinterpreted to the point that a number of Evangelical scholars are saying that the *teaching* of scripture, rather than the text, is without error.<sup>5</sup> Some have gone so far as to recognize and even categorize the marks of cultural conditioning on Scripture.<sup>6</sup> It is the latter issue which has such strong implication in relation to the use of scripture in counseling.

<sup>2</sup>Young, *Thy Word is Truth*, 30, states: "If the Bible is not a trustworthy witness of its own character, we have no assurance that our Christian faith is founded upon Truth." On p. 191 he adds: "It is equally true that if we reject this foundational presupposition of Christianity, we shall arrive at results which are hostile to supernatural Christianity. If one begins with the presuppositions of unbelief, he will end with unbelief's conclusion."

<sup>3</sup>For departures from the inerrancy position, see D. M. Beegle, *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), and J. Rogers, ed., *Biblical Authority* (Waco: Word Books, 1977). The latter is an attempted response to Lindsell. G. T. Sheppard of Union Theological Seminary states, however: "Despite all of (David) Hubbard's argument to the contrary," there is in practice little distinction between his brand of "evangelical" and "neoorthodox": in "Biblical Hermeneutics: The Academic Language of Evangelical Identity," *USQR* 32 (1977) 91.

<sup>4</sup>This argument is also developed by Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 17-40. He raises strong objections to the drift away from inerrancy by left-wing Evangelicals, noting that "Fundamentalists and Evangelicals (both of whom have been traditionally committed to an infallible or inerrant Scripture) have been long noted for their propagation and defense of an infallible Bible" (p. 20).

<sup>5</sup>R. Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974) 22; and *The Worldly Evangelicals* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978) 84. He describes at length the willingness of left-wing Evangelicals to reexamine the whole issue of the inspiration of the Bible.

<sup>6</sup>This can be seen readily in the contemporary approaches to cultural hermeneutics which hold that Pannenberg has really not successfully answered Lessing and Troeltsch. Cf. F. E. Deist, "The Bible—The Word of God," in W. S. Vorster, ed., *Scripture and the Use of Scripture* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1979) 41-70; H. Albert, "Theorie, Verstehen und Geschichte," *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie* 1 (1970) 3-23; V. Meja, "The Sociology of Knowledge and the Critique of Ideology," *Cultural Hermeneutics* 3 (1975) 57-68.

In current European theology we are told that truth is "near at hand in the Bible and yet will remain relatively hidden to us."<sup>7</sup> The Bible is "inspired" only in that in its human story we experience the Word of God as God, in a paradoxical manner, "speaks" to us through this volume of human writings.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the ultimate issue of the truth of Scripture rests upon the subjective experience of the believer. The "Word of God" within the Bible becomes a "canon within a canon" and eventually contemporary theologians become reluctant to define *what* biblical content is in fact the "Word of God."<sup>9</sup> This leaves the biblical counselor with no absolute standard by which to minister God's truth to people. Thus, it is not surprising to notice that the word "Scripture" does not even appear in several recent works on "Christian Psychology."<sup>10</sup>

## II. COUNSELING AND THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

Have you ever tried to sell or promote something in which you did not really believe? It is a miserable experience! The salesman who has no confidence in his product will reluctantly knock on your door, hoping no one will answer. The same is true of the pastor who has no real confidence in the Bible or his ability to apply its truth to the lives of his people. When the counselee calls for help, he will think up an excuse to avoid answering him, or slip out the side door of the study while his secretary stalls the distressed soul in the outer office.

While engaged in a revival crusade in a large metropolitan city a few years ago, a dejected pastor came to me after a service and said,

<sup>7</sup>Even the so-called evangelical Dutch theologians Berkouwer, Kuitert, and Van Ruler are now clearly leaning in the same direction as Labuschagne. See Kuitert's *De Realiteit van het Geloof* (Kampen: 1968) 164ff.; and Labuschagne's *Wat zegt de Bijbel in Gods Naam?* (Gravenhage: 1977) 60-65. In each of these writers one readily observes to varying degrees an interesting mixture of rational objectivity and confessional pietism.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. the comments of K. Runia, "The Word of God and the Words of Scripture," *Vox Reformata* 11 (1968) 4-11; J. D. Watts, "The Historical Approach to the Bible: its Development," *RevExp* 71 (1974) 160-67; and F. E. Deist, *Heuristics, Hermeneutics and Authority in the Study of Scripture* (Port Elizabeth, R.S.A.: University of Port Elizabeth, 1979) 1-49.

<sup>9</sup>See the amusing critique by C. Villa-Vicencio in response to B. Engelbrecht's, "The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture" in Vorster, *Scripture*, 108-12, where he sarcastically states: "If we are not able to give some rational articulation to what we mean by 'inspiration', 'revelation' or 'Word of God' within the Bible—then perhaps we ought to drop the concepts altogether . . . For after all, inspiration is possibly no more than a theological-cultural imposition on the scriptures."

<sup>10</sup>See M. A. Jeeves, *Psychology & Christianity: The View Both Ways* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1976); R. L. Koteskey, *Psychology from a Christian Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980); M. J. Sall, *Faith, Psychology and Christian Maturity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975.)

"It all seems so empty." "What does?" I asked. He went on to explain that he had visited someone in the hospital that day and after listening to the person's tale of trouble, he replied (holding up his Bible), "God has the answer." He felt like he was deceiving people, merely repeating an empty epithet or a corny cliché. "It just isn't enough," he muttered. "There must be something more I could have said."

"Of course," I responded, "there is much more that you could have said!" What was wrong? He believed the Bible, but he did not use it. "What concepts did you teach her? What verses did you give her? What principles did you develop from the Scripture that applied to her problem?" I asked. Why was he so dejected? Because he had failed as a minister and as a counselor. He lost confidence in his results because he had no method. That woman needed to be reminded of God's sovereignty over sickness and his desire to teach and comfort her during this time (cf. 2 Cor 1:3-7). She needed to see this time as a meaningful, though difficult, experience in her life.<sup>11</sup> She needed truth and he gave her half-truth. The effective Christian counselor cannot merely wave the Bible over people as if it were a magic wand. He must open it and explain and apply its truths to the soul in need.<sup>12</sup>

#### A. *Thy Word is Truth: Confidence in the Message*

In Harold Lindsell's important and controversial book, *The Battle for the Bible*, he raises the question of the trustworthiness of Scripture. "Is the Bible a reliable guide to religious knowledge?" he asks.<sup>13</sup> If it is, then the minister of God has every reason to hold tenaciously to its truths above the prevalent opinion of his contemporaries.<sup>14</sup> Nearly every major school of thought in philosophy

<sup>11</sup>Even the secular psychiatrist Victor Frankl warns that the counselor not ignore the meaningfulness of human suffering and tragic circumstances. He quotes Dubois as stating, "The only thing that makes us different from a veterinarian is the clientele." See *The Doctor and the Soul*, trans. R. Winston (New York: Vintage Books, 1973) ix.-xxi.

<sup>12</sup>A recent statistical survey has shown that people seek a religious counselor because they are looking for spiritual help more than anything else. Cf. E. J. Pasavac and B. M. Hartung, "An Exploration into the Reasons People Choose a Pastoral Counselor Instead of Another Type of Psychotherapist," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 31 (1977) 23-31.

<sup>13</sup>See his defense of inerrant inspiration in *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 18-27.

<sup>14</sup>This position is strikingly presented by R. J. Rushdoony's analysis of the apologetic of Van Til in *By What Standard?* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1958) 19-64, where he applies the story of the emperor's clothes to the nakedness of compromising biblical truth with man's reason.

and psychology rejects the authority of the Bible.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, it is virtually impossible and epistemologically disastrous to attempt a merger between biblical truths and anti-biblical concepts. This is clearly evident among those who have attempted to integrate liberalism and orthodoxy in theology.<sup>16</sup>

The pastor as a Christian counselor stands in a unique position, having been equipped with a manual of instruction. All genuine biblical counseling presupposes the reliability of that book. Apart from the message of God's truth, Charles Ping is right when he refers to religious language as "meaningful nonsense."<sup>17</sup> The minister of that word is more than an integrator of psychology and religion; he is the interpreter and applicator of that word.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, all of his theological studies and their practical application rest upon his view of the Bible.

Edward J. Young raised the issue of the dependability of Scripture and related it to applied theology when he warned: "If, therefore, the Church today takes the wrong turning and finds herself in the land of despair and doubt, she has not harkened to the Guidebook, but has allowed herself to be deceived by signposts with which her enemy has tampered."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Cf. C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University, 1938) presents "phenomenology" as the absolute standard. "Speaking for instance of the motive of the virgin birth, psychology is only concerned with the fact that there is such an idea, but it is not concerned with the question of whether such an idea is true or false in any other sense" (p. 3). See also A. Sabatier, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion Based on Psychology and History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957) 30-66, who rejects the validity of biblical revelation as a "psychological illusion."

<sup>16</sup>See the excellent discussion of Rowley's, Brunner's, and Niebuhr's approaches to Scripture in J. F. Walvoord, ed., *Inspiration and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957) 190-252. Carnell's statement is worth remembering: "Neo-Orthodoxy judges the Bible by dialectical insights; orthodoxy judges dialectical insights by the Bible." (p. 252).

<sup>17</sup>C. J. Ping, *Meaningful Nonsense* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966). He argues against all attempts to make "the language of faith" objectively meaningful. Thus, he puts all religious terminology into what Francis Schaeffer likes to call the "upper story" of verification (cf. *Escape From Reason* [Chicago: InterVarsity, 1968], chaps. 2-3).

<sup>18</sup>Cf. the early attempt at this by J. G. McKenzie (*Psychology, Psychotherapy and Evangelism* [New York: Macmillan, 1941]).

<sup>19</sup>E. J. Young, *Thy Word is Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 13-14. For other clear expositions of the doctrines of Scripture as related to inspiration, cf. N. B. Stonehouse and P. Woolley, eds., *The Infallible Word* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1946); C. F. H. Henry, ed., *Revelation and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958); C. Van Til, *The Protestant Doctrine of Scripture* (den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1967); C. H. Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971); J. W. Montgomery, ed., *God's Inerrant Word* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974).

John Warwick Montgomery has analyzed the modern preacher from the archetype of Rev. Eccles in John Updike's novel, *Rabbit, Run*, where the minister feels deeply the needs of frustrated modern man, but is totally incapable of meeting those needs because he has no authoritative word of judgment or grace to offer him.<sup>20</sup> Certainly such a biblically impoverished ecclesiastic has little real help to offer those with real problems. Thus, the ultimate origin of the erroneous idea that the pastor is not qualified to counsel has arisen from a theological lack of confidence in the power of Scripture. This leaves the so-called minister a victim of professional secular psychologists as his only course of help.<sup>21</sup> The pastor's escape from responsibility is: "See a psychiatrist." The psychiatrist's escape from responsibility is: "See a pharmacist."

The Bible itself claims to be a divine message from God. It is not "the" truth; it is truth! All truth may not be in the Bible, but all that is in the Bible is true. The Bible itself is the standard of what is in fact true.<sup>22</sup> Jesus himself prayed, "Sanctify them through thy word: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).<sup>23</sup> He proclaimed that his words were not his own, "but the Father's which sent me" (John 14:24). The psalmist sang, "The words of the Lord are pure words as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps 12:6). The Apostle Paul wrote: "... but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess 2:13). That the Scriptures claim to be, and that Jesus Christ believed them to be, the infallible revelation of God is a matter beyond dispute.<sup>24</sup>

The Bible is indispensable in our knowledge of God and of his will. Young urged: "A return to the Bible is the greatest need of our day . . . unless the church is willing to hear the Word of God, she will soon cease to be the church of the living God."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup>See, "Biblical Inerrancy: What Is at Stake?" in *God's Inerrant Word*, 15. Montgomery's crisp analyses of contemporary theology gets beyond the theoretical to the practical and are most helpful.

<sup>21</sup>See the interesting comments of J. I. Packer in the Foreward to E. Hindson, ed., *Introduction to Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976) 13; he refers to the confused pastor "who has no better remedy than to refer them to a psychiatrist!"

<sup>22</sup>Otherwise, the standard of truth is nothing more than a constantly varying tradition of men (e.g., cf. F. F. Bruce and E. G. Rupp, eds., *Holy Book and Holy Tradition* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968]).

<sup>23</sup>See discussion of Jesus' use of OT Scripture in R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1971), esp. chap. 5.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Lindsell's quotation of Kirsopp Lake, who admits that the liberals have departed from the traditional view of the church, not the fundamentalists. "The Bible and the *corpus theologicum* of the church is on the fundamentalist side" (*Battle for the Bible*, 19). Even an honest liberal has to admit that the Bible clearly claims to be the Word of God.

<sup>25</sup>Young, *Thy Word is Truth*, 273.



### B. *Thy Word Works: Confidence in Counseling*

If the Bible is the inspired word of God, then it will prove to be so in that it fulfills its claims and promises. I once sat next to a young college student on a flight from Indianapolis to Detroit. We began talking about religion and the Bible. After listening to the claims of Scripture, he asked, "But how do you know for sure that the Bible is true?" I explained that if he took a course in chemistry and the textbook claimed that the mixture of two chemicals would produce a certain result, he could only prove that for certain by personal experimentation. "How could you know the book was correct?" I asked. "When I did what it said," he replied, "it would work." "That is exactly how you can know that the Bible is true," I announced. "When you do what it says, it works!"

The Bible, I further explained, tells me about a Person who can change my life by faith in him alone. When I did what the Book said, I experienced exactly what it claimed I would: the assurance of eternal life and the forgiveness of sin.

Not only does the Bible claim to prepare men for heaven but for life on earth as well. The significance of the Sermon on the Mount is that it is a spiritual message designed to equip man to live on earth. This is also emphasized in the well-known passage from Paul: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim 3:16-17). The "man of God" in the context is the minister of God's word. He has been fully equipped by that word to teach, reprove, correct, and instruct the people of God. The Christian counselor must operate in the confidence that the Bible works because it is truth.

It is exactly in this regard that Jay Adams has challenged self-styled "Christian counseling" which wants the Bible as a "tack-on" to its ideas, but not as the sole foundation of its methodology. It is with complete confidence that God has designed the Scriptures to speak to the inner emotional and spiritual needs of man that this article has been prepared to apply a specific body of Scripture to those needs through the means of nouthetic counseling.

For Adams, the use of Scripture in counseling involves an interaction of five essential factors:<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup>J. Adams, *The Use of the Scriptures in Counseling* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1975) 17ff. This book represents his fullest explanation and defense of scriptural counseling. No wonder he quotes Mowrer's now famous quip: "Has evangelical religion sold its birthright for a mess of psychological pottage?" See *The Crisis in Psychology and Religion* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1961) 60.

1. A biblical understanding of the counselee's problem, from . . .
2. A clear understanding of the Holy Spirit's *telos* in scriptural passages appropriate to both the problem and the solution, and . . .
3. A meeting of man's problem and God's full solution in counseling, according to . . .
4. The formulation of a biblical plan of action, leading toward . . .
5. Commitment to scriptural action by the counselee.

Nouthetic counseling requires a prior knowledge of Scripture on the part of the counselor. He must be "thoroughly furnished" in order to teach, reprove, correct, and instruct the counselee. It is the fear that the Bible does not have the answer to the problem that forces many pastoral counselors to abandon it in favor of some other approach. This practice must be stopped before the pastoral counselor finds himself adrift in a maelstrom of conflict and confusion.

Most non-Christian and non-biblical counseling errs on the very first point of Adams's scheme. It fails to understand the counselee's problem biblically and hence is able neither to diagnose it adequately nor to treat it effectively. The basic understanding of man is essential to one's personality theory and method of therapy. Thus, the use of Scripture in nouthetic counseling could just as easily be called "Bible therapy"!

As the counselor studies the principles of the Bible, the Holy Spirit is building a reserve bank of divine truth from which he may draw during the counseling process. The counselee also has the opportunity to learn from these truths himself as he studies and applies his "homework" assignment in Scripture.

Nouthetic counseling is really Christian or biblical counseling. Adams has emphasized the word "nouthetic" simply to distinguish a system of biblically oriented counseling in contrast to semi-secularized, quasi-christianized, so-called Christian counseling.<sup>27</sup> Nouthetic counseling takes seriously the biblical commands to "admonish," "teach," "exhort," "reprove," "correct," "instruct." The Greek word *νουθησις* focuses upon confrontation of the client by the counselor, with the aim of bringing about repentant change of behavior. The fundamental

<sup>27</sup>See his comments in *What About Nouthetic Counseling?* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1976) 1-6. he notes, for example, that the term *νουθησία* is strictly Pauline, whereas the Johannine vocabulary is *παρακλητος*.

<sup>28</sup>This issue has been popularized by P. K. Jewett (*Man as Male and Female* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975]); L. Scanzoni and N. Hardesty (*All We're Meant To Be* [Waco: Word, 1975]); and V. Mollenkott, (*Women, Men, and the Bible* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1977]). However, its methodology rests upon the neo-orthodox concept of cultural hermeneutics, i.e., the messages of the Bible were culturally-conditioned by the human experience and cultural reactions of the writers of scripture. For background, see K. Wolff, "Introduction to Fifty Years of 'Sociology of Knowledge,'" *Cultural Hermeneutics* 3 (1975) 1-5.

purpose of nouthetic confrontation is to effect personality and character change by the power of the Holy Spirit using the inspired Word of God to speak through the counselor to the counselee. Nouthetic counseling is an applied confrontation with the inspired truths and principles of Scripture.

### III. COUNSELING AND CULTURAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

Probably the most crucial issue of the inerrancy debate relating to the area of Christian counseling is the attempt of the so-called "Biblical Feminists" to discount the implications of scriptural statements regarding the male-female relationship as it is defined in the Bible.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the "Biblical feminists" encourage a hermeneutic of "deculturization," arguing that one cannot "absolutize the culture in which the Bible was written."<sup>29</sup> Hence, the "cultural contamination" of the biblical writers leaves their statements open to reinterpretation in light of a different culture which exists today. That which is judged to be culturally conditioned is then rejected as "not binding" on today's believer.<sup>30</sup>

#### A. *Cultural Discrepancies*

While Jewett affirms the "inspiration" of Scripture, he definitely allows for some discrepancy between God's eternal "Word" and the words of the biblical writers.<sup>31</sup> In wrestling with the apparent contradictions between what he views as the biblical view of women and St. Paul's emphasis upon female submission, Jewett concludes that Paul's human limitations dominate in the passages that teach female subordination.<sup>32</sup>

In her evaluation of their position Susan Foh states:

To summarize, the biblical feminists see irreconcilable contradictions in the Bible's teaching on women. These contradictions are resolved by acknowledging that the Bible reflects human limitations. The culture in biblical times was patriarchal, and the men who wrote the Bible were inextricably influenced by their culture . . . Therefore, the biblical feminists reason, we must remove cultural elements from the Bible to recover God's truth; we must deculturize the Bible.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup>Mollenkott, *Women, Men, and the Bible*, 92.

<sup>30</sup>Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant to Be*, 19.

<sup>31</sup>Jewett, *Man as Male and Female*, 133-35.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>33</sup>See the excellent biblical evaluation of Susan Foh, *Women and the Word of God: A Response to Biblical Feminism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 7. She has undoubtedly provided the most thorough biblical study of the feminist issue yet written. She rests her case upon a genuine appreciation of the inerrant statements of the Scripture.

Thus, the "Biblical Feminists" actually carry Barth's exposition of Eph 5:21-33 even further than he intended by advocating a total reversability of male/female roles.<sup>34</sup> The more liberal "Christian Feminists" go further yet, denying the legitimacy of any sexual identity and advocating a non-divine, fallible Christ.<sup>35</sup>

In the realm of Christian counseling, such an approach to the authority and meaning of Scripture becomes ludicrous. The Biblical statements may be flatly rejected as being propositional and may be reinterpreted solely in the light of one's contemporary culture. Thus, *culture*, not the Scripture, becomes the ultimate authority in one's life. However, a sound exegesis of biblical passages reveals just the opposite! The Scripture consistently speaks *against* the culture of its day.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, it is tragic to see the unwitting capitulation of writers such as Helen Beard who adopt Jewett's reasoning as an excuse for "elevating" women beyond the "limitations of culturally-conditioned" Scripture in order to free them for a more "positive ministry."<sup>37</sup>

An honest study of the Scripture would never raise such issues as marital role reversal or the ordination of women. These have arisen within certain Christian circles only because they are related to issues in the wider secular culture. The Church has always stood uniquely in her non-conformity to culture. She has had to place revelation over culture in order to determine God's sure word of direction in moral and ethical issues. Like the first-century church, we dare not base our Christian ethics upon a fallible contemporary culture but upon the unchanging principles of God's inerrant word.

### B. *Moral Discrepancies*

The legality and non-legality of specific sexual acts is currently a very controversial topic. In every era there have been conservative people who held traditional beliefs about the dignity of the family. Based upon the heritage of the Judaeo-Christian ethic, they have believed that forms of sexual activity which violate the monogamous male/female relationship are injurious to the health of society and, therefore, should be declared unlawful.

<sup>34</sup>See Jewett, *Man as Male and Female*, 83.

<sup>35</sup>See the extreme comments of Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon, 1973) 69-70.

<sup>36</sup>Jesus' statements about various Jewish customs alone are ample testimony (e.g., possessions, the religious establishment, marriage, divorce, sabbath observance, etc.).

<sup>37</sup>See H. Beard, *Women in Ministry Today* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1980) 127-55. She especially commends the ministry of Kathryn Kuhlman and Mother Teresa.

Whereas adultery is now looked upon by many as an "unfortunate disloyalty," it is called an act of *sin* in the Bible (1 Cor 6:18). Homosexuality is equally condemned in both the OT and NT (Deut 23:17; Rom 1:26-28). Incest was prohibited by the Law of Moses (Lev 20:11-17) and denounced by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor 5:1-5).

### 1. Biblical Ethics Vs. Natural Ethics

To biblically committed people the ultimate issue in ethics is that of revealed ethics as opposed to natural ethics. Thus, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews acknowledge a common ethic based upon theism (belief in God). The Judaeo-Christian theistic ethic finds its basis in the OT and NT scriptures. Cornelius Van Til clarifies this matter, stating: "What we mean is that the Old and the New Testaments together contain the special revelation of God to the sinner, without which we could have not true ethical interpretation of life at all."<sup>38</sup>

Likewise, the theist's view of the function of law is based upon the legal-ethical commands of God as revealed to the writers of Scripture. Russell Kirk notes that even Plato argued that the achievement of justice could not be gained by following nature (as some sophists had declared); rather, it could be found only by obeying the νόμος (law).<sup>39</sup> The question is, whose law? Are we to acknowledge the laws of God as revealed in Scripture or the general consensus of society?

The maintenance of any society depends upon the conscious holding to a enforcing of some form of law. The function of law is essential to any society's stability and perpetuity. Jewish and Christian concepts of law go back to the self-revelation of God to man. "Thou shalt not" is the basis of divine law from the opening chapters of the Bible. It is reinforced in the commands of Moses which governed every aspect of Jewish life and in the teachings of Jesus who urged his followers: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20). Thus, human consent to any matter is irrelevant if it does not bear the sanction of God's approval.

<sup>38</sup>Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Theistic Ethics* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974) 15. Van Til discusses at length the epistemological presuppositions of theistic ethics arguing that the "objective" morality of the idealist is at the bottom as subjective as the "subjective" morality of the pragmatist!

<sup>39</sup>See the discussion of Russell Kirk, *The Roots of American Order* (La Salle: Open Courts, 1974) chap. 1. He traces the origin of all American ethical law to the concept of ultimate truth, without which, he argues, there can be no consistent legal system. Cf. also the excellent study of biblical ethics by John Murray, *Principles of Conduct* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964). He observes that the proper study of Christian ethics is not merely an empirical survey of Christian behavior but rather the delineation of an ethical manner of life based upon Biblical revelation.

## 2. "Christian" Homosexuality and the Bible

In both liberal and evangelical circles the issue of homosexuals demanding sanction by the church has become a volatile issue.<sup>40</sup> In some denominations, homosexuals have even demanded acceptance into ordination of the professional clergy.<sup>41</sup> Some have gone so far as to use the contextualization of culture as an argument for reinterpreting the Biblical statements about homosexuality as merely reflecting an overt heterosexual bias against homosexuals.<sup>42</sup> One author argues that Paul's restrictions regarding homosexuals in Romans 1 are based upon a pro-Roman (anti-Greek) cultural disposition and not the heart of a loving God.<sup>43</sup> Thus, apostolic "opinions" are neither applicable to nor infallible for today's society. Hudson argues:

1. Man did not fully understand or comprehend the "sexual nature" of man before or during the time of Paul's apostolic ministry.
2. Homosexuality was a forbidden practice of the Jews, and so traditionally held by Christians as well.
3. Prior to Paul's conversion he was a member of the Pharisees . . . which oriented his thinking about "right and wrong" practices for conduct.
4. Jesus did not speak on the subject of homosexuality.
5. Therefore, Paul was in *error* when he made culturally-conditioned statements about homosexuals without any clear revelation from God.<sup>44</sup>

The basis of this type of reasoning denies the legitimate inspiration of Scripture and the inerrancy of its statements on moral issues. The implications for Christian counseling are overwhelming. Since counseling involves the interpretation and application of the scriptures to moral and ethical issues, it is of vital importance that one's doctrine

<sup>40</sup>For surveys of the issue, see G. L. Bahnsen, *Homosexuality: A Biblical View* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978); R. F. Lovelace, *Homosexuality and the Church* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1978); T. La Haye, *The Unhappy Gays* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1978); P. Morris, *Shadow of Sodom* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1978); J. White, *Eros Defiled: the Christian and Sexual Sin* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1978).

<sup>41</sup>See the discussion of homosexuality and church polity in D. Williams, *The Bond that Breaks: Will Homosexuality Split the Church?* (Los Angeles: BIM, 1978).

<sup>42</sup>The most thorough representative of this approach is Billy Hudson, *Christian Homosexuality* (North Hollywood, CA: Now Library, 1975). He argues extensively that God is "gay," that Christianity and homosexuality are compatible," that homosexuality is a predetermined fate in life.

<sup>43</sup>See the statements of D. S. Baily, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London: Longmans, 1955), and J. McNeill, *The Church and the Homosexual* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1976) 95ff.

<sup>44</sup>Hudson, *Christian Homosexuality*, 166-67.



of inerrant inspiration form the basis of his approach to counseling. If the Bible is not really the Word of God, then propositional revelation is not binding upon the Church. Thus, every generation could subjectively interpret for itself what Biblical concepts it would accept as legitimate for its culture.

The Bible is the basis of all Christian ministry.<sup>45</sup> Its doctrines form the standard of conduct for the Church. With these as his foundation, the pastoral counselor must reprove, correct, and instruct (2 Tim 3:16). The time has come for an avalanche of biblical materials for use in counseling. It is time the pastor equipped with the inerrant Word of God began using it with confidence to the glory of God and the benefit of his congregation.

<sup>45</sup>On the biblical basis of the Christian counseling ministry, see L. Crabb, *Principles of Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975); *Effective Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977) 147-48; and W. O. Ward, *The Bible in Counseling* (Chicago: Moody, 1977) 22-24; J. Adams, "Counseling and Special Revelation," in *More Than Redemption: A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 16-37; C. Narramore, "The Use of the Scripture in Counseling," in *The Psychology of Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973) 237-73; and to a lesser degree G. Collins, "The Church and Counseling," in *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide* (Waco: Word, 1980) 13-21



## THE PROMISE OF THE ARRIVAL OF ELIJAH IN MALACHI AND THE GOSPELS

WALTER C. KAISER, JR.

*Was John the Baptist the fulfillment of Malachi's prediction about Elijah the prophet who was to come before that great day of the Lord comes? The hermeneutical solution to this question is offered in a generic fulfillment, or what the older theologians called the novissima. Therefore, Elijah has come "in the spirit and power" witnessed in John the Baptist, and will yet come in the future. Generic prophecy has three foci: (1) the revelatory word, (2) all intervening historical events which perpetuate that word, and (3) the generic wholeness (one sense or meaning) in which the final or ultimate fulfillment participates in all the earnestness that occupied the interim between the original revelatory word and this climactic realization.*

\* \* \*

THE NT's interest in the prophet Elijah may be easily assessed from the fact that he is the most frequently mentioned OT figure in the NT after Moses (80 times), Abraham (73), and David (59); Elijah's name appears 29 or 30 times.<sup>1</sup>

Even more significant, however, are the six major and explicit references to Elijah in the Synoptic Gospels. There, some of Jesus' contemporaries identified our Lord—in the second of three opinions—as Elijah (Mark 6:14-16; Luke 9:7-9). Jesus' disciples were also aware of this popular confusion, for they too repeated it (Matt 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21). This connection between Jesus and Elijah continued to hold its grip on many even up to the time of the crucifixion, for those who heard Jesus' fourth word from the cross thought he was calling on Elijah to rescue him (Matt 27:45-49; Mark

<sup>1</sup>J. Jeremias, "ἠλ(ε)ιας," *TDNT* 2 (1964) 934. The disparity of 29 or 30 is due to a textual problem in Luke 9:54.

15:33–36). And who should appear on the mount of transfiguration but Moses and Elijah, talking to Jesus (Matt 17:1–19; Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36)?

But there were two other references in the Synoptics which referred to a future coming of Elijah. One came when Jesus' disciples asked why the scribes claimed it was necessary that Elijah had to come first (Matt 17:10–13; Mark 9:11–13). Jesus responded that "Elijah had come" and said it in such a way that the disciples knew that he meant he was John the Baptist. If any doubt remained, Jesus said just that in Matt 11:14—"he is Elijah, the one who was to come."

However, when one turns from the Synoptics to the Fourth Gospel, none of these six references are present. Instead, we find John categorically denying that he was either Christ, "that [Mosaic] prophet," or *Elijah* (John 1:21, 25)! John's clear disavowal is so stark by way of contrast with the way he is presented in the Synoptics that the Synoptics and John appear to contradict one another flatly. What explanation can be offered for this phenomenon? And what impact does it have on the question of the NT author's use of OT citations?

## I. THE ISSUES

At stake in this discussion are three critical points of tension: (1) the identity of that coming messenger or future prophet named Elijah, (2) the time of his coming, and (3) the task(s) assigned to him. Each of these three questions raises a number of hermeneutical and theological issues that have left their mark on various traditions of interpretation.

However, even before these three tension points have been joined, perhaps there is a prior question which asks if Elijah's coming is at all connected with the coming of the Messiah. A recent study by Faierstein concludes that:

... contrary to the accepted scholarly consensus, almost no evidence has been preserved which indicates that the concept of Elijah as forerunner of the Messiah was widely known or accepted in the first century C.E. . . . The only datum . . . is the *baraita* in *b. Erubin* 43a–b, a text of the early third century C.E. . . . The further possibility, that the concept of Elijah as forerunner is a *novum* in the NT must also be seriously considered.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Morris M. Faierstein, "Why Do the Scribes Say That Elijah Must Come First?" *JBL* 100 (1981) 86. John H. Hughes, "John the Baptist: The Forerunner of God Himself," *NovT* 14 (1972) 212 is of the same opinion: "There is no reliable pre-Christian evidence for the belief that Elijah was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and this helps support the suggestion that the conception originated with Jesus." [!]

Faierstein, while conveniently avoiding the strong evidence of Mal 3:1; 4:4–5 and the repeated NT allusions, tends to assign either a post-Christian date or to reserve judgment on a whole series of evidences to the contrary from the Jewish community. Certainly the Qumran fragment J. Starcky cited (*lkn ʔšlh lʔlyh qd[m]*, “therefore I will send Elijah befo[re]. . .”) is incomplete;<sup>3</sup> but it should have reminded Faierstein to take another look at Mal 3:1; 4:4–5 [Heb 3:24–25]. Faierstein also sets aside the same eighteen rabbinic texts which L. Ginzberg analyzes differently.

Now, in no fewer than eighteen passages in the Talmud, Elijah appears as one who, in his capacity of precursor of the Messiah, will settle all doubts on matters of ritual and judicial.<sup>4</sup>

But the *locus classicus* of these eighteen, *m. ʿEd. 8.7*, is exceptionally clear. Elijah would establish legitimate Jewish descent, family harmony, and resolve differences of opinion and religious controversies. He would do all this, says *m. ʿEd. 8.7* “. . . as it is written, *Behold I will send you Elijah, the prophet . . . and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers.*”<sup>5</sup> Once again, we are brought back to the Malachi texts if we are to make any decision on what was normative either for pre-Christian Judaism or the NT itself. To this day, Judaism continues to reserve for Elijah a distinguished place and loosely to relate it to their fading expectation of the coming of the Messiah. This can best be seen in the cup of Elijah and the seat reserved for him at every Passover meal. The hope and prayer of every Jew at the conclusion of the Passover—“next year in Jerusalem”—is one piece of a larger picture of the coming Messianic era. And at the heart of it remains the open door for the new Elijah.

## II. MALACHI 3:1; 4:4–5

### A. *The Identity of ‘My Messenger’*

God’s answer to the impious complaints of the wicked men and women of Malachi’s day who mockingly sneered: “Where is the God of justice?” was to send *his* messenger to prepare the way for the God

<sup>3</sup>J. Starcky, “Les Quatre Etapes du Messianisme à Qumran,” *RB* 70 (1963) 489–505. The fragment is 4QarP. See p. 498 as cited in Faierstein, “Elijah Must Come First?” 80, nn. 33–34.

<sup>4</sup>L. Ginzberg, *An Unknown Jewish Sect* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1976) 212. These 18 texts all end 18 talmudic discussions and are known by the term *teyqu* which came to mean “The Tishbite will resolve difficulties and problems.” Ginzberg lists the location of these 18 passages in n. 14 on p. 212.

for whom they allegedly searched. He did not promise merely a messenger, but one that was already familiar to them from the informing theology of Isa 40:3, for the words used to describe this messenger were the same as those used there: he was "to prepare the way."

No doubt the words "my messenger" (מִלְאָכִי) were intended to be both a play on the name of the prophet Malachi and prophetic of a future prophet who would continue his same work. But he was certainly to be an earthly messenger and not a heavenly being. This can be demonstrated from three lines of evidence: (1) in Isaiah the voice which called for the preparation of the nation came from someone in the nation itself; (2) this same messenger in Mal 3:1 is associated with Elijah the prophet in Mal 4:5; and (3) he is strongly contrasted with "The Lord," "even the messenger of the covenant" in Mal 3:1.<sup>6</sup>

Thus this messenger cannot be the death angel, as the Jewish commentator Jarchi conjectured,<sup>7</sup> or an angel from heaven as another Jewish commentator Kimchi alleged from Exod 23:20, a passage which finds its context in a time when Israel was being prepared for a journey into the desert. God's mouthpiece was an earthly proclaimer.

#### B. *The Identity of the Lord and the Messenger of the Covenant*

"The Lord" (הָאֱלֹהִים) can only refer to God when used with the article.<sup>8</sup> That he is divine personage is also evident from these additional facts: he answers to the question of Mal 2:17, "Where is the *God* of justice?" (2) he comes to "*his* temple" (Mal 3:1) and thus he is the owner of that house in which he promised to dwell; and (3) he is also named the "Messenger of the covenant" (מִלְאָךְ הַבְּרִית). Furthermore, it is clear from passages such as Zech 4:14 and 6:5, "אֲנִי of the whole earth," that אֲנִי is used interchangeably with Yahweh.<sup>9</sup>

The title "Angel or Messenger of the Covenant," is found nowhere else in the OT. Nevertheless, the title is very reminiscent of the more

<sup>5</sup> Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (London: Oxford University, 1958) 437 [italics his].

<sup>6</sup> These three arguments are substantially those of E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament* (trans. James Martin) (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1875) 4.164.

<sup>7</sup> R. Cashdan, *Soncino Books of the Bible: The Twelve Prophets* (ed. A. Cohen; London: Soncino, 1948) 349.

<sup>8</sup> So argues T. V. Moore (*The Prophets of the Restoration: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi* [New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1856] 376). He refers to Exod 23:17; 34:23; Isa 1:24; 3:1; 10:16, 33; Mal 1:12, etc. In Dan 9:17 אֲנִי seems to refer to the Son.

<sup>9</sup> So argues Joyce G. Baldwin (*Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi* [Tyndale Old Testament; 1).



frequently used, "Angel of the Lord." That was the same "Angel" who had redeemed Israel out of the land of Egypt (Exod 3:6), had gone before the army as they crossed the Red Sea (Exod 14:19), led Israel through the wilderness (Exod 23:20) and filled the temple with his glory. He was one and the same as Yahweh himself. This Angel was God's own self-revelation, the pre-incarnate Christ of the numerous OT Christophanies.<sup>10</sup> He is the same one discussed in Exod 23:20–23; ("Behold, I send an Angel . . . My name is in him") 33:15 ("My Presence [or face] shall go with you") and Isa 63:9 (The Angel of his Presence or face").

The covenant of which he is the messenger is the same one anciently made with Israel (Exod 25:8; Lev 26:11–12; Deut 4:23; Isa 33:14) and later *renewed* in Jer 31:31–34 as repeated in Heb 8:7–13 and 9:15. Therefore, while the covenant was a single plan of God for all ages, this context addressed mainly the Levitical priesthood (Mal 1:6–2:9) and the nation Israel (Mal 2:11; 3:5, 8) for violating that covenant relationship.

Still, it must be stressed that there are not two persons represented in "The Lord" and the "Messenger of the Covenant" but only one, as is proven by the singular form of "come" (בָּא).<sup>11</sup> Thus the passage mentions only two persons: "The Lord" and the preparing messenger.

### C. *The Connection Between the Announcer's Task and the Work of the Lord*

The preparing messenger was "to clear the way before [the Lord]." The striking similarity between this expression (וּפְנֵה דֶרֶךְ לְפָנָה) and that found in Isa 40:3; (פְּנוּ דֶרֶךְ יְהוָה) 57:14 and 62:10 is too strong to be accidental. The resemblance between Isaiah and Malachi was drawn out even to the omission of the article from דֶרֶךְ, "way"; the only difference is that in Malachi the *messenger* is to prepare the way while in Isaiah the *servants* of the Lord are urged to prepare the road.

Under the oriental figure of an epiphany or arrival of the reigning monarch, the text urged for a similar removal of all spiritual, moral, and ethical impediments in preparation for the arrival of the King of Glory. Whenever a king would visit a village, the roadway would be straightened, leveled, and all stones and obstacles removed from the road that the king would take as he came to visit the town. The only other instance of this expression is in Ps 80:9 [Heb 10]: פָּנִיתָ לְפָנֶיךָ, "You cleared [the ground] before it [= the vine (or the nation

<sup>10</sup>See W. C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) pp. 85, 120, 257–58. See references to the "Angel of the Lord" in such texts as Gen 16:7; 22:11, 15; Judg 2:1; 6:11, 14.

<sup>11</sup>So argues E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology*, 4.168.

Israel) brought out from the land of Egypt].” Once again, however, it was necessary to do some *clearing away* as a preparation before the nation Israel, here represented as a vine, was to be able to be planted and to take deep root in the land.

This future messenger would likewise clear out the rubbish, obstacles, and impediments “before me”—the same one who was identified in the next sentence as “*The Lord*,” “even the *Messenger of the Covenant*.” The equation of these three terms can be argued for even more convincingly when it is noticed that the *waw*, “and,” which introduces the phrase “and the messenger of the covenant whom you desire” is an exegetical *waw* used in apposition to the phrase “The Lord whom you are seeking.” Therefore we translate the whole verse:

Behold, I will send my messenger. He will clear the way ahead of me. Suddenly, the Lord whom you are seeking will come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come, says the Lord of hosts.

Over against this preparatory work, the Lord and Messenger of the Covenant was to arrive “suddenly” (מִתְקַדֵּם) at his temple. The people had longed for the coming of God in judgment as a redress to all wrongs (Mal 2:17). Indeed, he would come, but it would be “unexpectedly.”<sup>12</sup> The ungodly hoped for a temporal deliverer, but Mal 3:2 warned that most would not be able to stand when that day of judgment came. Not only would the heathen gentiles be judged, but so too would the ungodly in Israel. It would appear that the final judgment associated with the second advent has been blended in this passage with the Lord’s arrival in his first advent. It was necessary to be prepared for both!

#### D. *The Identity of Elijah the Prophet*

Does Malachi expect the Tishbite to reappear personally on the earth again? It would not appear so, for Mal 4:5–6 specifically said, “Behold, I will send you Elijah *the*<sup>13</sup> prophet, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.” Only the LXX reads “Elijah the Tishbite.” The reason Elijah was selected is, (1) he was head of the prophetic order in the nation Israel and (2) many of his successors

<sup>12</sup>T. Laetsch (*Bible Commentary: The Minor Prophets* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1956] 531) says “Suddenly, *pitʿom*, is never used to denote immediacy; it always means unexpectedly, regardless of the lapse of time (Joshua 10:9; 11:7; Num. 12:4; Ps. 64:5, 8, A.V. 4, 7; Prov. 3:25; 6:15; Isa. 47:11; Jer. 4:20, etc.).”

<sup>13</sup>Jack Willsey (“The Coming of Elijah: An Interpretation of Malachi 4:5,” [unpublished Master’s dissertation, San Francisco Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, 1969] 31) notes that the use of the article with *נָבִיא* refers “to Elijah: specifically, the Elijah who was known to the readers as *the prophet* (as opposed to any other possible Elijah).”

indirectly received the same spirit and power that divinely was granted to him. There was, as it were, a successive endowment of his gifts, power, and spirit to those who followed in his train.

This phenomenon is known already in the OT, for 2 Chr 21:12 mentions "a writing from Elijah the prophet" during the reign of King Jehoram when Elijah had already been in heaven for many years. Furthermore, many of the acts predicted by Elijah were actually carried out by Elisha (2 Kgs 8:13) and one of the younger prophets (2 Kgs 9:13). Indeed, Elisha had asked for a double portion, the portion of the firstborn (בְּרִיחַ, 2 Kgs 2:9), as his spiritual inheritance from Elijah. Thus, just as the spirit of Moses came on the seventy elders (Num 11:25) so the "spirit of Elijah"<sup>14</sup> rested on Elisha" (2 Kgs 2:15).

We are to expect a literal return of Elijah no more than we expect a literal return of David as the future king over Israel. Surely passages like Jer 30:19; Hos 3:5; Ezek 34:23; and 37:24 promise a new David. But it is universally held that this new David is none other than the Messiah himself who comes in the office, line, and promise of David. Consequently, we argue that the new Elijah will be endowed with this same spirit and power without being the actual Elijah who was sent back long after his translation to heaven.

#### *E. The Connection Between Elijah and the Forerunner*

There can be little doubt that Elijah the prophet is one and the same as the messenger whom the Lord will send to prepare the way before him. Mal 4:5 marks the third great "Behold" in this book (3:1; 4:1, and here) and therefore carries our mind and eye back to the other two passages. A second similarity is to found in the participial phrase, "I am sending." There is also, in the third place, a similarity of mission; for both the verbs "to clear the way" (פָּנֶה) and "to restore" (שׁוּב) are based on verbs which also mean "to turn" and hence imply a repentance or turning away from evil and a turning towards God. In the fourth place, the play on *sending* "my messenger" with Malachi's name in 3:1 is matched in 4:5 by *sending* "Elijah." Finally, both 3:1 and 4:5a are followed by references that speak of the awesomeness of the day of the Lord (3:2; 4:5b).

#### *F. The Time of Day of the Lord*

This messenger, who is called the prophet Elijah, is to appear "before that great and terrible day of the Lord comes." That day was

<sup>14</sup>For a long discussion of the Christian history of interpretation of the NT identity of Elijah, see E. B. Pusey, *The Minor Prophets*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950) 2. 499–502 and E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology*, 4. 195–200.

described in similar terms in Joel 2:11, 31 and Zeph 1:14. A number of the OT prophets view that day as *one* day and a *collective* event which entailed this three-way puzzle: (1) though five prophets refer to that day as "near" or "at hand," their prophecies are spread over four centuries (Obad 15; Joel 1:15; 2:21; Isa 3:6; Zeph 1:7, 14; Ezek 30:3); (2) these prophets also saw different immediate events belonging to their own day as being part of that "day of the Lord" including destruction of Edom, a locust plague, or the pending destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.; and (3) nevertheless, that day was also a future day in which the Lord "destroyed the whole earth" (Isa 13:5) and reigned as "King over all the earth" (Zech 14:1, 8-9), a day when "the elements will be dissolved . . . and the earth and the works that are in it will be laid bare" (2 Pet 3:10), as well as a day of salvation and deliverance (Joel 2:32).

It is just such a day that Mal 3:2; 4:1, 5 mention. The principle of generic or successive fulfillment is most important if we are adequately to explain and be faithful to all the biblical data. T. V. Moore stated it this way:

There are a number of statements by the sacred writers that are designed to apply to distinct facts, successively occurring in history. If the words are limited to any one of these facts, they will seem exaggerated, for no one fact can exhaust their significance. They must be spread out over all the facts before their plenary meaning is reached. There is nothing in this principle that is at variance with the ordinary laws of language. The same general use of phrases occurs repeatedly. . . . Every language contains these formulas, which refer not to any one event, but a series of events, all embodying the same principle, or resulting from the same cause.

[Thus] . . . the promise in regard to the "seed of the woman," (Gen. 3:15) refers to one event but runs along the whole stream of history, and includes every successive conquest of the religion of Christ . . . [This] class of predictions . . . is . . . what the old theologians called the *novissima* . . .<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the "Day of Yahweh" is a generic or collective event which gathers together all the antecedent historical episodes of God's judgment and salvation along with the future grand finale and climactic event in the whole series. Every divine intervention into history before that final visitation in connection with the second advent of Christ constitutes only a preview, sample, downpayment or earnest on that climactic conclusion. The prophet did not think of the day of the

<sup>15</sup>T. V. Moore, *Zechariah, Malachi*, 396-99.

Lord as an event that would occur once for all, but one that could "be repeated as the circumstances called for it."<sup>16</sup>

Now, the future Elijah, the prophet, will appear "before that great and terrible day of the Lord comes." Furthermore, as shown in Mal 3:1 and Isa 40:3, he will prepare the way for Yahweh. But which coming of the Messiah is intended by Malachi—the first or second advent? Since most conclude along with the NT writers that the messenger's preparation was for the first advent of our Lord, and since the events included in that day in Mal 3:2ff and Mal 4:1ff involve the purification of the Levites, the judgment on the wicked and the return of the Yahweh to his temple, it is fair to conclude that that day embraces both advents. This is precisely the situation which Joel 2:28–32 presents. The fulfillment of Joel's words at Pentecost is as much a part of that day as the seismographic and cosmological convolutions connected with the second advent.

The basic concept, then, is that Malachi's prophecy does not merely anticipate that climactic fulfillment of the second advent, but it simultaneously embraces a series of events which all participate in the prophet's single meaning even though the referents embraced in that single meaning are many.<sup>17</sup> In this way, the whole set of events make up *one* collective totality and constitute only *one* idea even though they involve many referents which are spread over a large portion of history. Perhaps the best way to describe this phenomenon is to call it a generic prediction which Willis J. Beecher defined as:

... one which regards an event as occurring in a series of parts, separated by intervals, and expresses itself in language which may apply indifferently to the nearest part, or to the remoter parts, or to the whole—in other words, a prediction which in applying to the whole of a complex event, also applies to some of its parts.<sup>18</sup>

### III. JOHN THE BAPTIST AND NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT

The NT question may now be asked: "Was John the Baptist the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecies or was he not?"

<sup>16</sup>Willis J. Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1905; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970) 311.

<sup>17</sup>A most helpful distinction can be found in G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980) chap. 2. He distinguishes between meaning<sup>V</sup> (= value: "This means more to me than anything else"), meaning<sup>E</sup> (= entailment: "This means war"), meaning<sup>R</sup> (= referent: identifies person(s) or thing(s) named or involved), meaning<sup>S</sup> (= sense: gives qualities of person or thing) and meaning<sup>I</sup> (= intention: the truth-commitment of the author).

<sup>18</sup>W. J. Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise*, 130.

### A. *Three Basic Positions*

Three basic answers have been given to this inquiry: (1) John the Baptist fully fulfilled all that was predicted of the messenger who would prepare the way and Elijah will not come again;<sup>19</sup> (2) Elijah the Tishbite will personally reappear and minister once again at the end of this age;<sup>20</sup> and (3) John the Baptist did come as a fulfillment of this prophecy, but he came in "the spirit and the power of Elijah" and is thereby only one prophet in a series of forerunners who are appearing throughout history until that final and climactically terrible day of Yahweh comes when it is announced by the last prophet in this series of forerunners.<sup>21</sup>

### B. *A Generic Fulfillment of the Elijah Prophecy*

From our examination of Malachi's prophecy it is clear that we should adopt the third alternative. The identity, timing, and tasks of this messenger in Malachi all argue for his appearance in two different individuals, if not a series of them, rather than a single individual such as John the Baptist.

The NT evidence yields a similar construction. Matt 11:14 quotes Jesus as affirming that "he [John the Baptist] is himself (αὐτός ἐστιν) Elijah, the one who is to come." Again in Matt 11:10 (= Luke 7:27), "This (οὗτος) is the one of whom it is written, 'Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare the way before thee'." So John was that one—Elijah the prophet!

Yet it is just as clear that John denies that he is Elijah: "I am not [Elijah] (ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμί, John 1:21, 23); and that Luke assures us that John the Baptist came only in the "spirit and power of Elijah" (ἐν πνεύματι καὶ δυνάμει, Luke 1:17). Even when it is clear that John only denied being Elijah in the popular misconceptions entertained by the people of John's day, John could be identified as Elijah only because the same Spirit and power that had energized Elijah had now fallen on him.

<sup>19</sup>John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950) 5. 627; E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology*, 4. 165; Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974) 49; David Allan George Knight, "John the Baptist and Elijah: A Study of Prophetic Fulfillment," (Unpublished M.A. thesis; T.E.D.S., Deerfield, IL, 1978) 115–16.

<sup>20</sup>John Paul Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1974) 185–87; Tertullian, "A Treatise on the Soul," 3:217.

<sup>21</sup>Justin Martyr, "Dialogue with Trypho," 1:219–20; Aurelius Augustine, "St. John's Gospel," 7:27; T. T. Perowne, *Malachi* (The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1890) 39; J. T. Marshall, "The Theology of Malachi," *ExpT* 7 (1895–96) 126; J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958) 311–12.



### C. *The New Elijah's Tasks*

Even the task of this coming prophet had this same two-pronged focus. Mark 9:12 answers the inquiry of Peter, James, and John ("Why do the scribes say the first Elijah must come?") as they were returning from the Mount of Transfiguration and hearing about the Son of Man suffering and being raised again by saying: "Elijah has come [ἐλθὼν, past] first and is restoring [ἀποκαθιστάνει, present] all things." Matt 17:11, referring to the identical event, combined the present with the future tense: "Elijah is coming (ἔρχεται, present) and he will restore [ἀποκαταστήσει]<sup>22</sup> all things." Since this present is coupled with a future tense, the present must be interpreted as a futuristic present—"Elijah is coming."

Now the term "restoration" is used in the OT both as a technical term for the restoration of Israel to their own land<sup>23</sup> and as a moral restoration of the inner man.<sup>24</sup> We believe that Matthean and Markan uses of this verb are parallel, in part, to the noun form (ἀποκαταστήσεως) used in Acts 3:21. In Acts, Peter states that Jesus now remains in heaven "until the time of the restoration (or 'establishing')<sup>25</sup> of all things that God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets." That too is a future work associated with the *parousia*.

Luke has described John's work as one of going before the Lord to prepare his ways, of giving the knowledge of salvation to his people and giving light to those in darkness (Luke 1:76-79). He would also "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children (ἐπιστρέψαι καρδίας πατέρων ἐπὶ τέκνα, Luke 1:17, which follows the MT of Mal 4:6 in the verb ἐπιστρέφω instead of the LXX ἀποκαθίστημι)."

### IV. CONCLUSION: HERMENEUTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The emerging picture is clear. How can we disassociate Elijah who is to come from the day of the Lord? And how can we limit the day of the Lord entirely to the second advent and the *parousia*? Both errors will lead to a result less than what was intended by Malachi.

<sup>22</sup>Both Matthew and Mark's word for "restoration" is found in the LXX. The Hebrew MT of Mal 4:6 has מְשִׁיחַ. The text of Sir 48:10 followed the LXX.

<sup>23</sup>Jer 15:19; 16:15; 23:8; 24:6; Hos 11:10

<sup>24</sup>Amos 5:15. I owe these references to David A. G. Knight, "John the Baptist and Elijah," 93.

<sup>25</sup>Some prefer to link this idea with the fulfillment or establishment of OT prophecy; see K. Lake and H. J. Cadberry, *The Acts of the Apostles, The Beginnings of Christianity* (ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake; 5 vols.; London: Macmillan, 1933) 4. 38, as cited by Knight, "John the Baptist and Elijah," 94. This is a strange word to express that concept when so many others were available and used by Luke. The OT usage appears to be too fixed to allow this novel meaning—especially in a passage that appeals to the prophets!

Elijah still must come and "restore all things" (Matt 17:11) "before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes" (Mal 4:5).

Nevertheless, let no one say that Elijah has not already in some sense come, for our Lord will affirm the contrary: "Elijah has come." Now, what explanation will adequately answer all of these phenomena? Were it not for the fact that this same type of phenomenon occurs with so many other similar prophetic passages, we would need to conclude that the text presented us with internal contradictions. But this is not so, for the list of generic prophecies wherein a single prediction embraced a whole series of fulfillments when all those fulfillments shared something that was part and parcel of all of them is a long one.<sup>26</sup>

Some will argue that this is nothing more than what most name "double fulfillment of prophecy." This we deny. The problem with "double fulfillment" is threefold: (1) it restricts the fulfillments to two isolated events and only two; (2) it usually slides easily into a theory of double senses or dual intentionality in which the human author usually is aware of none of these referents or meanings or at most only one (if it is contemporaneous) with the other or both fulfillments left as surprises for the future generation in which they take place; and (3) it focuses only on the predictive word (usually given in abstraction from the times in which that word came) and on the final fulfillment without any attention being given as to how God kept that word alive in the years that intervened between the divine revelation and the climactic fulfillment.

Only generic prophecy can handle all three foci: (1) the revelatory word; (2) the series of intervening historical events which perpetuate that word; and (3) corporate, collective, and generic wholeness of that final fulfillment with whatever aspect of realization that event has had in the interim as God continued to promise by his Word and to act by his power throughout history. The intervening events, then, while being generically linked with that final event, were earnestings, down-payments, samplers, partial teasers until the total payment came in God's climactic fulfillment.

That exactly is what happened in the case of John the Baptist. He was only a sample of a portion of the work that was to be done in the final day. We can show this by referring to the identities, tasks, and timing given in Malachi and the Gospels without adding at this time the further evidence of the work of one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11.

<sup>26</sup>See W. C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Promise of God and the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit: Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:16-21," *The Living and Active Word of God*, ed. Morris Inch and Ron Youngblood (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1982).

John then was Elijah as an earnest, but we still await the other Elijahs and especially that final Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of our Lord. The meaning<sup>1</sup> is *one*; not two, three, or *sensus plenior*. Only that sense given by revelation of God can be normative, authoritative, and apologetically convincing to a former generation of Jews or to our own generation. We urge Christ's Church to adopt the single meaning of the text and a generic meaning for prophecies of the type found in Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6.



## THE RICH YOUNG MAN IN MATTHEW

ROBERT L. THOMAS

*An investigation of any gospel passage which is paralleled in one or more of the gospels is heavily influenced by what solution, if any, one adopts for the Synoptic Problem. If no literary dependence is assumed, one's approach is quite different from those who choose this or that solution to the Synoptic Problem. This last option results in attributing the differing emphases of the gospel writers ultimately to Jesus himself rather than to the individual writers. Matthew chose to retain several of the emphases of Jesus' encounter with the rich young man which are not retained in Mark and Luke, including the man's youthfulness, the importance of the works of love, and the future repayment for those who follow Christ. These stem from the historical occasion and are not the products of Matthew's editorial alteration of the historical incident.*

\* \* \*

**S**TUDY of the life and teaching of Christ is complex today. We have passed into an era which calls forth the deepest of analytical thought regarding the formation of the gospels. Thorough scrutiny of the avalanche of literature that has been and is appearing to treat this subject is impossible. But a student of the New Testament must maintain some familiarity with it to avoid being swept away by the tide of confusion that prevails. In the process of sifting he will hopefully gain a better perspective of how our gospels came to us and what they contain.

The basis of modern study is the findings of Source Criticism. It is a foregone conclusion to most who labor here that some type of literary interrelationship exists among the three Synoptic Gospels. Has this assumption ever been proven? Historical evidence of it is lacking. Literary proof of it depends on an adequate solution to the Synoptic Problem.

It is this problem that we must deal with first in investigating any Synoptic Gospel passage. The most widely held proposal regarding gospel relationships is currently the Two-Source Theory. Since any methodology is only as good as its presuppositions and since most





καὶ δὸς οἱ [τοῖς] πτωχοῖς, καὶ ἔξεις θησαυ- ρὸν ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολουθεῖ μοι. 22 ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ νεανίσκος ἔτ' ὁ λόγος ἀπῆλθεν λυπούμενος· ἦν γὰρ ἔχων κτήματα πολλά.	καὶ δὸς οἱ [τοῖς] πτωχοῖς, καὶ ἔξεις θησαυ- ρὸν ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολουθεῖ μοι. 22 ὁ δὲ ἑστειλάσας ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἀπῆλθεν λυπούμενος· ἦν γὰρ ἔχων κτήματα πολλά.	καὶ διάδος τῷ πτωχοῖς, καὶ ἔξεις θησαυρὸν ἐν [τοῖς] οὐρανοῖς, καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολουθεῖ μοι. 23 ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας ταῦτα τῷ περίλυπος ἔγενήθη· ἦν γὰρ πλούσιος σφόδρα.
23 Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πλούσιος δυσκόλως εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρα- νῶν.	23 Καὶ περιβλεψάμενος ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· πῶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελεύσονται. τὸ 24 οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ τὸ θαμβοῦντο ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν ἀπο- κριθεὶς λέγει αὐτοῖς· τέκνα, πῶς δύσ- κολόν ἐστιν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν τῷ 25 εὐκοπώτερον ἐστὶν κάμη- λον διὰ τῆς τρυμαλιᾶς οἱ τῆς τρυμαλιᾶς εἰσελθεῖν ἢ πλοῦσιον εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν.	24 Ἰδὼν δὲ αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς [περίλυτον γενόμενον] εἶπεν· πῶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσπορεύονται.
24 πάλιν δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, τὸ εὐκοπώτερον ἐστὶν κάμη- λον διὰ τρυπήματος βραβίδος εἰσελθεῖν ἢ πλοῦσιον εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 25 ἀκούσαντες δὲ	25 εὐκοπώτερον γὰρ ἐστὶν κάμη- λον διὰ τρυπήματος βραβίδος εἰσελθεῖν ἢ πλοῦσιον εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν.	

οἱ μαθηταὶ τ' ἐξεπλήσσοντο τ' σφόδρα λέγοντες· τίς ἄρα δύναται σωθῆναι; 26 ἐμβλένας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἵπαντα δυνατὰ ἔστιν. 27 Τότε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι· τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν; 28 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ἑαυτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι	26 οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἐξεπλήσσοντο λέγοντες πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς· καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι; 27 ἐμβλένας τ' αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει· παρὰ ἄνθρώποις τὴν ἀδύνατον, ἀλλ' οὐ παρὰ τῷ θεῷ πάντα γὰρ δυνατὰ ἔστιν. 28 Ἡρξάτο λέγειν ὁ Πέτρος αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήκαμεν σοι. 29 ἔφη ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν,	26 εἶπαν δὲ οἱ ἁκούσαντες· καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι; εἶπεν· τὰ ἀδύνατα παρὰ ἀνθρώποις δυνατὰ ἔστιν. 28 Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Πέτρος· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι. 29 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ...	22, 28-30 (nr. 313, p. 286) 28 ἡμεῖς δὲ ἔσμεν οἱ διαμεμενηκότες μετ' ἡμῶν ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου· 29 καὶ γὰρ διατίθεται ὑμῖν τὸ καθὼς διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ μου· 31 βασιλείαν, 30 ἵνα ἔσθητε καὶ πίνητε ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης μου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου καὶ καθύπεσθε
οἱ μαθηταὶ τ' ἐξεπλήσσοντο τ' σφόδρα λέγοντες· τίς ἄρα δύναται σωθῆναι; 26 ἐμβλένας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἵπαντα δυνατὰ ἔστιν. 27 Τότε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι· τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν; 28 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ἑαυτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι	26 οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἐξεπλήσσοντο λέγοντες πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς· καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι; 27 ἐμβλένας τ' αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει· παρὰ ἄνθρώποις τὴν ἀδύνατον, ἀλλ' οὐ παρὰ τῷ θεῷ πάντα γὰρ δυνατὰ ἔστιν. 28 Ἡρξάτο λέγειν ὁ Πέτρος αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήκαμεν σοι. 29 ἔφη ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν,	26 εἶπαν δὲ οἱ ἁκούσαντες· καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι; εἶπεν· τὰ ἀδύνατα παρὰ ἀνθρώποις δυνατὰ ἔστιν. 28 Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Πέτρος· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι. 29 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ...	22, 28-30 (nr. 313, p. 286) 28 ἡμεῖς δὲ ἔσμεν οἱ διαμεμενηκότες μετ' ἡμῶν ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου· 29 καὶ γὰρ διατίθεται ὑμῖν τὸ καθὼς διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ μου· 31 βασιλείαν, 30 ἵνα ἔσθητε καὶ πίνητε ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης μου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου καὶ καθύπεσθε
οἱ μαθηταὶ τ' ἐξεπλήσσοντο τ' σφόδρα λέγοντες· τίς ἄρα δύναται σωθῆναι; 26 ἐμβλένας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἵπαντα δυνατὰ ἔστιν. 27 Τότε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι· τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν; 28 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ἑαυτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι	26 οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἐξεπλήσσοντο λέγοντες πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς· καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι; 27 ἐμβλένας τ' αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει· παρὰ ἄνθρώποις τὴν ἀδύνατον, ἀλλ' οὐ παρὰ τῷ θεῷ πάντα γὰρ δυνατὰ ἔστιν. 28 Ἡρξάτο λέγειν ὁ Πέτρος αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήκαμεν σοι. 29 ἔφη ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν,	26 εἶπαν δὲ οἱ ἁκούσαντες· καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι; εἶπεν· τὰ ἀδύνατα παρὰ ἀνθρώποις δυνατὰ ἔστιν. 28 Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Πέτρος· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι. 29 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ...	22, 28-30 (nr. 313, p. 286) 28 ἡμεῖς δὲ ἔσμεν οἱ διαμεμενηκότες μετ' ἡμῶν ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου· 29 καὶ γὰρ διατίθεται ὑμῖν τὸ καθὼς διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ μου· 31 βασιλείαν, 30 ἵνα ἔσθητε καὶ πίνητε ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης μου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου καὶ καθύπεσθε

ἐπὶ δώδεκα θρόνους κρίνοντες τὰς δώδεκα φυλάς κα φυλάς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ.	ἐπὶ τ θρόνων τὰς δώδεκα φυλάς κρίνοντες <sup>2</sup> τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ.
29 καὶ πᾶς ὁστις ἀφῆκεν οἰκίαν ἢ ἀδελφούς ἢ ἀδελφάς ἢ πατέρα ἢ μητέρα τ ἢ τέκνα ἢ ἀγρούς <sup>2</sup> ἡ ἔνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός μου <sup>1</sup> , ἡ ἑκατονταπλασίονα λήμψεται	18, 29b-30 29 ... οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν ὃς ἀφῆκεν οἰκίαν ἢ ἑγγοναῖκα ἢ ἀδελφούς ἢ τέκνα τ ἔνεκεν τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, <sup>30</sup> ὃς οὐχὶ μὴ <sup>1</sup> ἡ [ἀπο]λάβῃ ἡ πολλαπλασίονα ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ
καὶ ζῶν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσει. 30 Πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται ἡ πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι <sup>2</sup> .	καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζῶν αἰώνιον. (nr. 262 18, 31-34 p. 224)

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καὶ δὸς οἱ τοῖς] πτωχοῖς, καὶ ἔξεις θησαυ- ρόν ἐν [οὐρανοῖς,] καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολουθεῖ μοι. 22 ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ νεανίσκος [τόν λόγον] ἀπῆλθεν λυπούμενος· ἦν γάρ ἔχων ῥκτῆματα πολλά.	καὶ δὸς οἱ τοῖς] πτωχοῖς, καὶ ἔξεις θησαυ- ρόν ἐν [οὐρανοῖς,] καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολουθεῖ μοι. 22 ὁ δὲ [στυγνάσας] ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἀπῆλθεν λυπούμενος· ἦν γάρ ἔχων ῥκτῆματα πολλά.	καὶ διάδος τῷ πτωχοῖς, καὶ ἔξεις θησαυρόν ἐν [τοῖς] οὐρανοῖς,] καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολουθεῖ μοι. 23 ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας ταῦτα τ περίλυτος ἔγεννηθη· ἦν γάρ πλούσιος σφόδρα.
23 Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ῥκλούσιος δυσκόλως ἴ εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρα- νῶν.	23 Καὶ περιβλεψάμενος ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· πῶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελεύσονται. τ 24 οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ τ ἔθαμβοῦντο ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν ἀπο- κριθεὶς λέγει αὐτοῖς· ῥτέκνα, πῶς δύσ- κολόν ἐστιν τ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν τ 25 Πεῦκοπώτερόν ἐστιν ῥκάμη- λον διὰ ῥτρυπήματος ραφίδος ῥ διελεθεῖν ἢ πλούσιον εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 25 ἀκούσαντες δὲ	24 Ἰδὼν δὲ αὐτόν ὁ Ἰησοῦς [περίλυτον γενόμενον] εἶπεν· πῶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσπορεύονται· 25 εὐκοπώτερον γάρ ἐστιν ῥκάμη- λον διὰ ῥτρυπήματος ῥι βελόνης ῥ2 εἰσελθεῖν ἢ πλούσιον εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν.
26 εἶπαν δὲ οἱ ῥἀκού- σαντες·	26 εἶπαν δὲ οἱ εἰσελθεῖν.	26 εἶπαν δὲ οἱ ῥἀκού- σαντες·

οἱ μαθηταὶ τ ἐξεπλήησαντο τ σφόδρα λέ- γοντες·	26 οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἐξεπλήησαντο λέ- γοντες πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς· καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι;	27 ἐμβλέψας τ αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει· παρά τ ἀνθρώποις τ ἀδύνατον, ἀλλ' οὐ παρά τ θεῷ· πάντα γάρ δυνατὰ τ <sup>3</sup> παρὰ οὗ τοῦ θεοῦ· 28 Ἦρξάτο λέγειν ὁ Πέτρος αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφί- καμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήκαμέν σοι τ <sup>1</sup> .	29 εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Πέτρος· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφέν- τες τὰ ἴδια ἠκολουθήκαμέν σοι.	29 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι...	καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι; 27 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· τὰ ἀδύνατα παρὰ ἀνθρώποις δυνατὰ ἐκ τῆς θεοῦ ἐστίν· 28 εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Πέτρος· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφέν- τες τὰ ἴδια ἠκολουθήκαμέν σοι.
οἱ μαθηταὶ τ ἐξεπλήησαντο τ σφόδρα λέ- γοντες·	26 ἐμβλέψας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ὅτι πάντα δυνατὰ τ <sup>2</sup> · 27 Τότε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφί- καμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήκαμέν σοι· τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν; 28 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι				
ὅτι ἡμεῖς οἱ ἀκολουθήσαντές μοι ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ, ὅταν καθίσῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ θρόνου δοξῆς αὐτοῦ, ἡ καθήσασθε καὶ ἡμεῖς					



ἐπὶ δώδεκα θρόνους κρίνοντες τὰς δώδεκα φυλάς κα φυλάς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ.	ἐπὶ τ θρόνων 5 τὰς δώδεκα φυλάς κρίνοντες 2 τοῦ Ἰσραήλ.
29 καὶ πᾶς ὅστις ἀφῆκεν 5 οἰκίαν ἢ ἀδελφούς ἢ πατέρα ἢ τέκνα ἢ ἀγρούς 2 ἔνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματος μου 1,	18, 29b-30 29... οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν ὅς ἀφῆκεν οἰκίαν ἢ γοναῖκα ἢ ἀδελφούς ἢ τέκνα τ ἔνεκεν τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, 30 ὅς οὐχὶ μὴ 1 γ [ἀπο]λάβῃ 5 πολλαπλασίονα
ἢ ἑκατονταπλασίονα 1 λήμψεται	ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ
καὶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσει.	καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι
30 Πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται 5 πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι 1.	τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. ( <i>nr. 262 18,31-34 p. 224</i> )
	οὐδὲ ἐστὶν ὅς ἀφῆκεν οἰκίαν ἢ ἀδελφούς ἢ πατέρα 1 τ ἢ τέκνα ἢ ἀγρούς ἔνεκεν ἑμοῦ γκαὶ ὅ ἐνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, 30 γ ἔαν μὴ 5 λάβῃ 5 ἑκατονταπλασίονα 1 οὐδὲν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ οἰκίας καὶ ἀδελφούς καὶ ἀδελφάς καὶ 5 1 μητέρας καὶ τέκνα καὶ ἀγρούς μετὰ 5 2 διωγμῶν, καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζωὴν αἰώνιον 1. 31 πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ ὁ[οῖ] ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι. ( <i>nr. 262 10,32-34 p. 224</i> )

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methodologies depend on the validity of the Two-Source Theory, a consideration of this theory is indispensable.

THE TWO-SOURCE THEORY  
AND MATTHEW/LUKE AGREEMENTS AGAINST MARK

The Two-Source Theory proposes that Matthew derived his account of the Rich Young Man from Mark's Gospel, and that Luke did likewise. It also presupposes besides this that there was no literary collaboration between Matthew and Luke in areas where they were thus dependent on Mark. While various modifications have been and are being offered, this continues to be the basic posture of the typical Two-Source proponent. The addition of sources M and L by some does not alter this characteristic of the view.

A question that has never been answered with any degree of success by those who advocate this approach is: how can one by following this scheme account for agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark? If each used Mark alone as his source in certain places, how do the two manage to write identical accounts in so many places where Mark has something different? The story of the Rich Young Man furnishes a good sampling of the widespread agreements between Matthew and Luke in cases where the two differ from Mark. The agreements are of two kinds: agreements of omission and agreements of inclusion. The agreements of omission are ten in number (see Exhibit I, pp. 236–39). It is noted that the majority of alleged omissions are substantial. While a rationale might be proposed to explain why Matthew and Luke could have coincidentally decided to omit each portion, the probability of such a happening in such a prolonged series is not great.

The agreements of inclusion number eighteen items<sup>1</sup> (see Exhibit II, pp. 240–43).

These alleged insertions by Matthew and Luke fall into three categories: those cases where the two have substituted a different word for the one Mark uses (6 instances of this), those cases where the two have chosen a different form of the same word (6 instances of this), and those cases where the two use the same word when Mark has nothing (6 instances of this):

<sup>1</sup>This list may be reduced if the  $\epsilon\tau\iota$  parallel is considered invalid (Matt 19:20/Luke 18:22) and if two variant readings are altered as they were in United Bible Society's 3rd edition and the Nestle-Aland 26th edition (Matt 19:24, 29).

**Exhibit III****Matthew/Luke Agreements Against Mark**  
*Kinds of Agreements*

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**Different choice of vocabulary:**

ἀκούσας instead of στυγνάσας (Matt 19:20/Luke 18:21)  
δέ instead of καί (Matt 19:23/Luke 18:24)  
τρήματος instead of τρυμαλιᾶς (?) (Matt 19:24/Luke 18:25)  
εἰσελθεῖν instead of διελθεῖν (Matt 19:24/Luke 18:25)  
εἶπεν instead of ἔφη (Matt 19:28/Luke 18:29)  
πολλαπλασίονα instead of ἑκατονταπλασίονα (?) (Matt 19:29/  
Luke 18:29)

**Different form of the same word:**

ἐφύλαξα instead of ἐφυλαξάμην (Matt 19:20/Luke 18:21)  
οὐρανοῖς instead of οὐρανῷ (Matt 19:21/Luke 18:22)  
εἶπεν instead of λέγει (Matt 19:23/Luke 18:24)  
εἶπεν instead of λέγει (Matt 19:26/Luke 18:27)  
εἶπεν instead of ἤρξατο λέγειν (Matt 19:27/Luke 18:28)  
ἠκολουθήσαμεν instead of ἠκολουθήκαμεν (Matt 19:27/Luke  
18:28)

**Common word where Mark is blank:**

ἐτι (?) (Matt 19:20/Luke 18:22)  
ἀκούσαντες (Matt 19:25/Luke 18:26)  
δέ (Matt 19:26/Luke 18:27)  
δέ (Matt 19:28/Luke 18:29)  
αὐτοῖς (Matt 19:28/Luke 18:29)  
ὅτι (Matt 19:28/Luke 18:29)

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It also is significant that the coverage of the 15 or so verses is evenly spread from beginning to end of the whole section. It is hardly probable that the two happened to refer to an additional source besides Mark 26 or 28 times in 15 verses. If they did, they must have been dependent on the other source rather than Mark.

After reviewing the impressive variety and quantity of the Matthean-Lucan agreements, one wonders how some can write them off so glibly. Marshall, for example, after commenting on one of the omissions in Luke 18:18, writes, "Similar omissions by Matthew are probably coincidental, since there is no other evidence of significant agreement between Lk. and Mt. here."<sup>2</sup> But the passage is full of such, and the statistical probability of such a long series being coincidences is infinitesimally small.

Attempts to reduce the length of such a list have included the presumption that Matthew and Luke frequently change Mark's καί to δέ. This has little impact on the present series of agreements, however, since it accounts for only one of the agreements. It also is less than persuasive that even this one should be deleted, because in at least two instances elsewhere in triple tradition portions Matthew and Luke agree in their use of καί where Mark has δέ (Mark 2:6 and par.; 14:47 and par.).

Another such attempt to limit the number of significant agreements has cited Matthew's and Luke's aversion to Mark's historical present, particularly in their frequent substitution of εἶπεν for λέγει. Yet if this be valid, and strong doubt exists that it is since Matthew himself uses the historical present λέγει in 19:18 and 20, the list is reduced by only two agreements.

#### PRESENT TRENDS AMONG NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARS

With the Two-Source Theory resting upon such shaky foundations as these, it is no wonder that a growing number of scholars are forsaking it in quest of one that is more intellectually satisfactory. Walker notes, "In recent years . . . the so-called 'Two-Document' or 'Two-Source Hypothesis' . . . has been seriously challenged from various quarters, and an increasing number of scholars is now arguing both for the elimination of the 'Q' theory and for the priority of Matthew or perhaps even Luke."<sup>3</sup> He adds, "In short, the critical

<sup>2</sup>I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 684; see also Willoughby C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), 211.

<sup>3</sup>William O. Walker, Jr., "Introduction: The Colloquy on the Relationships Among the Gospels," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, William O. Walker, Jr., ed. (San Antonio: Trinity University, 1978), 2.

consensus regarding gospel relationships now appears to have been shaken, if not shattered."<sup>4</sup> Outler joins in this appraisal: "A century-old consensus in the liberal Protestant tradition of gospel studies (with respect to dating, provenance, literary interdependence, etc.) has somehow, almost unexpectedly, become problematic all over again. . . . The tide of dissent from the academic conventions in which most of us were indoctrinated has now reached a level where it has to be taken seriously."<sup>5</sup> Lord agrees with the others: "In short, I find the Two-Source Theory inadequate to explain the relationship among the gospels in this significant complex of passages."<sup>6</sup> Reginald Fuller sums it up thus: "We are entering into a period of great 'fluidity' so far as acceptable views regarding the relationships among the gospels and other introductory matters are concerned."<sup>7</sup>

A recently published article by Boismard entitled "The Two Source Theory at an Impasse" expresses the dilemma through an examination of Mark 6:31-34 and parallels:<sup>8</sup>

Twenty years ago we could assume that the Two-Source theory, as the decisive solution to the synoptic problem had won the day. An unassailable dogma in Germany, on the front lines in Louvain, well positioned in England and the United States, it had little fear from the last spasms of its opponents, and could view them as the final stand of the rearguard. But times have changed. Aged Griesbach turns in his grave, refusing to stay defeated. After two centuries he has returned to the field in the persons of Dom Butler of England and, especially, W. R. Farmer of the United States. . . . Even in Germany the enemy has gained a foothold. Already in 1971 A. Fuchs saw that a large number of the Matthew/Luke agreements against Mark could not be explained in terms of the Two-Source theory.<sup>9</sup>

Attempts to explain away these agreements Boismard labels as "not very serious scholarship" and "a model of slapdash workmanship."<sup>10</sup> After careful examination of the omissions in his passage where Matthew/Luke agree against Mark, he notes, "It is true that Matthew

<sup>4</sup>Walker, "Introduction," 3.

<sup>5</sup>Albert C. Outler, "'Gospel Studies' in Transition," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 18.

<sup>6</sup>Albert B. Lord, "The Gospels as Oral Tradition Literature," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 82.

<sup>7</sup>Reginald H. Fuller, "Classics and the Gospels: the Seminar," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 192.

<sup>8</sup>M.-E. Boismard, "The Two-Source Theory at an Impasse," *New Testament Studies*, Lorraine Coza, Robert Beck, and Francis Martin, trans., vol. 26, 1-17.

<sup>9</sup>Boismard, "Two-Source Theory," 1.

<sup>10</sup>Boismard, "Two-Source Theory," 4.

and Luke *could have* independently eliminated from Mark's text all the phrases which are found only in Mark. However, this possibility can be given but a relatively small coefficient of probability."<sup>11</sup>

#### ALTERNATIVES TO THE TWO-SOURCE THEORY

What course is there to follow then? In the face of an imminent collapse of the Two-Source theory, what is this "growing number of students of the Bible, both Old Testament and New, who are scrutinizing not only the results of source criticism but also its assumptions and methods"<sup>12</sup> doing about it? They are taking different courses.

(1) A good number are turning back to Griesbach. It is generally agreed that "the Griesbach theory has now achieved a position of respectability, that it is at least a possible solution."<sup>13</sup>

(2) Others are writing off all the currently proposed solutions as being too simplistic. There has been widespread endorsement of E. P. Sanders' statements about this: "I rather suspect that when and if a new view of the Synoptic problem becomes accepted, it will be more flexible and complicated than the tidy two-document hypothesis. With all due respect for scientific preference for the simpler view, the evidence seems to require a more complicated one."<sup>14</sup> As Classical scholar George Kennedy adds, "The inability of New Testament scholars over a period of two hundred years to agree on the composition of the gospels, despite a general agreement that there are signs of a literary relationship, suggests that the true relationship may be very complex."<sup>15</sup> Walker's evaluation is relevant: "Many believe that an impasse has now been reached, with confidence in the Two-Source Hypothesis weakened but no other hypothesis successful in replacing it."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Boismard, "Two-Source Theory," 11.

<sup>12</sup>James A. Sanders, "The Gospels and the Canonical Process; a Response to Lou H. Silberman," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 219.

<sup>13</sup>Joseph B. Tyson, "Literary Criticism and the Gospels, the Seminar," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 340-41.

<sup>14</sup>E. P. Sanders, *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1969), 279.

<sup>15</sup>George Kennedy, "Classical and Christian Source Criticism," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 153.

<sup>16</sup>Walker, "Introduction," 3. A comparison of Warfield's remark in 1929 with a similar statement by Tyson in 1978 is interesting. Warfield writes, "And in general, *no form of criticism is more uncertain* [italics added] than that, now so diligently prosecuted, which seeks to explain the several forms of narratives in the Synoptics as modifications one of another" (Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Christology and Criticism* [New York: Oxford, 1929], 115n.). Tyson writes, "The situation now appears to be one in which there are *no certainties* [italics added] and few probabilities regarding relationships among the gospels" (Tyson, "Literary Criticism," 341). Outler



(3) Yet another way that has been suggested is to study the gospels "holistically."<sup>17</sup> This concept maintains that "disintegrating approaches by New Testament critics bypass the first essential step in historical scholarship, namely, the understanding of the religious documents in their integrity."<sup>18</sup> It maintains "that a greater degree of trust in the accuracy of the primary sources and of the external evidence is justified."<sup>19</sup>

This third approach has been restated in different ways. Lord and Rist have suggested that the problem of relationships among the gospels is not a literary problem at all, but rather an oral tradition problem, thus making the Synoptic Gospels represent three independent versions of "oral tradition literature."<sup>20</sup> Lord cites evidence that points "to the independence of each gospel rather than to the primacy of any one."<sup>21</sup> Meeks observes that the earliest church fathers were disinterested in the Synoptic Problem because they viewed the gospels as independent works. He says, "Both Papias and Clement write as if there were *no literary connection* between any of the gospels. . . . Clement and Origen . . . mention the gospels in the orders, respectively, Matthew, Luke, Mark, John and Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, but neither has a word to say about dependence."<sup>22</sup> Keck notes that "if Lord is correct, then the history of the debate over the Synoptic Problem becomes intelligible; this debate has not succeeded in solving the problem because it has pursued the wrong question for two hundred years; in other words, a great deal of gospel study has been a goose chase."<sup>23</sup>

The approach which considers the Synoptic Gospels to be independent of one another has been chosen as a basis for the methodology to be applied to the story of the Rich Young Man. Reasons for the choice differ somewhat from those of some others who choose to view the gospels thus, except in one respect: that is the inadequacy of any of the other approaches to explain the nature of an alleged literary relationship among the Synoptic Gospels. Outler expresses

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says bluntly, "I regard this problem as formally insoluble" (Outler, cited by Walker, "Introduction," 12). Reginald Fuller views it as an impossibility at the present juncture to solve the Synoptic Problem (Fuller, "Classics," 176).

<sup>17</sup> Tyson, "Literary Criticism," 335.

<sup>18</sup> Roland Mushat Frye, cited by Tyson, "Literary Criticism," 335.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Thomas Davis, cited by Fuller, "Literary Criticism," 334-35.

<sup>20</sup> Albert B. Lord and J. M. Rist, cited by Walker, "Introduction," 10.

<sup>21</sup> Albert B. Lord, "The Gospels," 58.

<sup>22</sup> Wayne A. Meeks, "Hypomnēmata from an Untamed Skeptic: A Response to George Kennedy," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 171.

<sup>23</sup> Leander E. Keck, "Oral Tradition Literature and the Gospels," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 116.

current dissatisfaction this way: "The ratio of conjecture to hard data in the historical-literary study of the gospels is higher than most critical historians would find acceptable."<sup>24</sup> Frye says it in these words: "Few if any of the leading literary historians in secular fields would be comfortable with the widespread assumption among New Testament critics that it is possible to move backwards in time from passages in the extant gospel texts in such a way as to identify previous stages or forms through which the tradition has supposedly developed and, ultimately, to arrive at or near the original life and teachings of Jesus; or that it is possible, through a similar procedure, to explain the synoptic redactions as we now have them."<sup>25</sup> Farmer agrees "that the conclusions provided by popular methodologies now being employed do little to carry us beyond subjective satisfaction."<sup>26</sup>

Aside from any solution to the Synoptic Problem, we will look at Matthew's account of the Rich Young Man with the presupposition of its integrity and worthiness of examination in its own right.<sup>27</sup> What can be learned from what he chose to retain, but Mark and Luke

<sup>24</sup>Outler, "Transition," 22.

<sup>25</sup>Roland Mushat Frye, "The Synoptic Problems and Analogies in Other Literatures," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 287. Frye notes how literary critics of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries went through many of the same phases as NT critics are going through in relation to Source, Form, and Redaction Criticism. They applied certain criteria to Shakespearean texts and determined that some portions were not attributable to Shakespeare himself, but were explainable in light of an earlier play taken over by Shakespeare or in light of a later editor who revised this text or that. Without being guilty of frivolity or wilful chicanery they made what is now recognized to be equivocal use of evidence to arrive at subjective conclusions. Through an elaborate scissors-and-paste process, one scholar was able to create from *Hamlet* an *Ur-Hamlet* so as to remove some of the problems and mysteries of *Hamlet* from the Shakespearean canon. Among literary critics this methodology has now been thoroughly discredited, even though it "was presented with elaborate learning, with extensive critical apparatus and sophisticated arguments, often with statistical tables and charts, and with repeated appeals to 'science'" (Frye, "Analogies," 288-89). The methodology of this disintegrating approach is strikingly similar to much that goes on in NT analysis (pp. 289-90). One wonders when such an "awakening" will occur among NT critics and they will realize the futility of the methodology which has such a stranglehold on the thinking of so many.

<sup>26</sup>William R. Farmer, "Basic Affirmation with Some Demurrals: a Response to Roland Mushat Frye," *The Relationships Among the Gospels*, 313.

<sup>27</sup>If the question be raised as to how one can account for the widespread agreements among the Synoptic Gospels apart from any theory of literary dependence, the option should be retained that the agreements may be accounted for by the fact that it happened that way in the historical setting of Jesus' life and by postulating some agreements in editorializing among the thousands of sources that must have been available to the writers. The accurate recording of the happening is more than adequately explained on the basis of memory, a large assortment of written descriptions, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

chose not to retain, should be a key to what emphases from Christ's life and teaching are his main interests.

#### MATTHEW'S SPECIAL EMPHASES

The following shows a number of the areas that are peculiar to Matthew and are therefore worthy of discussion (see Exhibit IV, pp. 252–55).

To begin with the more obvious, the rich young man in Matthew (19:20, 22) is the rich man in Mark (10:22) and the rich ruler in Luke (18:18, 23). Matthew is alone in referring to his age. Νεανίσκος is indefinite as to how young the young man was, but it may include up to 50 years of age.<sup>28</sup> One was “young” or νεώτερος until he became an elder or πρεσβύτερος (cf. 1 Pet 5:5). With this age-range possibility there is nothing inconsistent in the man's claim about his conduct “from his youth” as recorded by Mark (10:20) and Luke (18:21).

#### *Works of Love*

Matthew's special interest in the performance of good works comes to light in several features. He has chosen to retain the young man's question about the “good thing (or deed)” necessary to acquire eternal life (Matt 19:16), while Mark and Luke have not. To suppose that this feature is original with Matthew or that he has imported it from some other setting is completely unnecessary. He had no reason to do so, though some have accused him of this.<sup>29</sup> This accusation rests on the assumption that Matthew depended on Mark as his source, an assumption that is fraught with pitfalls. Long ago Warfield noted three hinges on which such a presupposition rests:

- (1) that in Mark's account Jesus is repelling the ascription of goodness, and therefore, of deity.
- (2) that Matthew, offended by the vocative “Good Teacher” in a way that Mark and Luke were not, has deliberately removed the “good” from the young man's address.
- (3) that Matthew in the process bungled the change by attributing to Jesus a masculine pronoun and adjective rather than a neuter.<sup>30</sup>

Add to these three the hinge that Matthew used Mark as a source, and there are four shaky presuppositions on which to base Matthew's

<sup>28</sup>L. Coenen, “Bishop, Presbyter, Elder,” *NIDNTT*, Colin Brown, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1. 192.

<sup>29</sup>Allen, *Matthew*, 208.

<sup>30</sup>Warfield, *Christology and Criticism*, 113–14.

# Exhibit IV

## Several Matthean Distinctives

Matt 19:16-30	Mark 10:17-31	Luke 18:18-30
<p>16 Kai ἰδοὺ εἰς προσελθὼν</p> <p>17 διδάσκαλε τ, τί ἀγαθὸν ποιήσω ἵνα σχῶ ζῶν αἰώνιον; 17δ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· (τί με ἔρωτᾷς περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ; εἰς ἔστιν ὁ ἀγαθός τ).</p> <p>18 εἰ δὲ θέλεις, ἴδεις τὴν ζῶν ἐισέλθειν, ἵ τήρῃσιν τὰς ἐντολάς, 18γ λέγει αὐτῷ· ποίας; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἔειπεν· ὅ το οὐ φονεύσεις, οὐ μοιχεύσεις, οὐ κλέψεις, οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις,</p> <p>19 τίμα τὸν πατέρα τ καὶ τὴν μητέρα, καὶ ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν, 20 λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ νεανίσκος· πάντα ταῦτα ἐφύλαξα τ, τί ἔτι ὑστερῶ;</p> <p>21 ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι, ὕπαγε πώλησον σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα</p>	<p>17 Kai ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ εἰς ὁδὸν (προσδραμών εἰς) καὶ γονυπετήσας αὐτὸν ἐπηρώτα Οὐτὸν τ.</p> <p>18 διδάσκαλε ἀγαθέ, τί ποιήσω ἵνα ζῶν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω; 18δ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ· τί με λέγεις ἀγαθόν; οὐδεὶς ἀγαθὸς εἰ μὴ (εἰς ὁ) θεός.</p> <p>19 τὰς ἐντολάς οἶδας·</p> <p>(μὴ φονεύσης, μὴ μοιχεύσης), μὴ κλέψης, μὴ ψευδομαρτυρήσης, μὴ ἀποστερήσης, τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα τ.</p> <p>20 ὁ δὲ ἔφη αὐτῷ· διδάσκαλε, (ταῦτα πάντα) ἐφύλαξα ἐκ νεότητός μου τ. 21δ δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐμβλέψας αὐτῷ ἠγάπησεν αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· τ ἔν ᾧ σε ὑστερεῖ· ὕπαγε, ὅσα ἔχεις πώλησον</p>	<p>18 Kai ἐπηρώτησέν τις αὐτὸν ὁ ἀρχὼν λέγων· διδάσκαλε ἀγαθέ, τί ποιήσας ζῶν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω; 19 εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· τί με λέγεις ἀγαθόν; οὐδεὶς ἀγαθὸς εἰ μὴ εἰς ὁ θεός.</p> <p>20 τὰς ἐντολάς οἶδας· τ</p> <p>(μὴ μοιχεύσης, μὴ φονεύσης, μὴ κλέψης, μὴ ψευδομαρτυρήσης), τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα τ.</p> <p>21δ δὲ εἶπεν· ταῦτα πάντα ἐφύλαξα ἐκ νεότητος τ.</p> <p>22 ἀκούσας δὲ τ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἔτι ἔν σοι λείπει· πάντα ὅσα ἔχεις πώλησον</p>

καὶ δὸς οἱ [τοῖς] πτωχοῖς, καὶ ἔξεις θησαυ- ρόν ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολουθεῖ μοι. 22 ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ νεανίσκος ἰδὼν λόγον ἀπήλθεν λυπούμενος· ἦν γὰρ ἔχων ῥητήματα πολλά.	καὶ δὸς οἱ [τοῖς] πτωχοῖς, καὶ ἔξεις θησαυ- ρόν ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολουθεῖ μοι. 22 ὁ δὲ ἰδὼν τὸν λόγον ἀπῆλθεν λυπούμενος· ἦν γὰρ ἔχων ῥητήματα πολλά.
23 Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἡ πλουσία δυσκόλως εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρα- νῶν.	23 Καὶ περιβλεψάμενος ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔλεγεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· πῶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελεύσονται. 24 οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ τὸ ἐθαμβοῦντο ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν ἀπο- κριθεὶς ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· Ἔτεκνα, πῶς δύσ- κολόν ἐστιν ᾧ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν. 25 ὁ εὐκοπώτερόν ἐστιν ᾧ κάμη- λον διὰ τῆς τρυμαλιᾶς οἰσθῆαι ἢ βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν.
24 πάλιν δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, τὸ εὐκοπώτερόν ἐστιν ᾧ κάμη- λον διὰ τρυπήματος ραφίδος εἰσελθεῖν ἢ πλούσιον οἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 25 ἀκούσαντες δὲ	25 εὐκοπώτερον γὰρ ἐστιν ᾧ κάμη- λον διὰ τρυπήματος ραφίδος εἰσελθεῖν ἢ πλούσιον εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν.

οἱ μαθηταὶ τ' ἐξεπλήσισοντο τ' σφοδρὰ λέ- γοντες· τίς ἄρα δύναται σωθῆναι; 26 ἐμβλέψας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἵπαντα δυνατὰ τ' . 27 Ὅτε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφή- καμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι· τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν; 28 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ἑαυτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι	26 οἱ δὲ περισσωσ ἐξεπλήσισοντο λέ- γοντες πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς· καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι; 27 ἐμβλέψας τ' αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει· παρὰ τ' ἀνθρώποις τ' ἀδύνατον ἵ- πάντα γὰρ δυνατὰ τ' 28 Ἡρξάτο λέγειν ὁ Πέτρος αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφή- καμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήκαμεν σοι τ' . 29 ἔφη ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν,	26 εἶπαν δὲ οἱ ἑαυτοῖς καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι; 27 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· τὰ ἀδύνατα παρὰ ἀνθρώποις δυνατὰ ἵπαντα τῷ θεῷ ἐστιν· 28 Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Πέτρος· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἑαφέν- τες τὰ ἴδια· ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι. 29 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ...	22, 28-30 (nr. 313, p. 286) 28 ἡμεῖς δὲ ἔστε οἱ διαμεμενηκότες μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου· 29 καὶ γὰρ διατίθεμαι ὑμῖν τ'· καθὼς διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ ὁ μου· ἡ βασιλείαν, 30 ἵνα γέσθητε καὶ πίνετε ἐκ τῆς τραπέζης μου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ ὁ μου καὶ ἡ καθήσεσθε
ὅτι οἱ μαθηταὶ τ' ἐξεπλήσισοντο τ' σφοδρὰ λέ- γοντες· τίς ἄρα δύναται σωθῆναι; 26 ἐμβλέψας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἵπαντα δυνατὰ τ' . 27 Ὅτε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφή- καμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι· τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν; 28 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ἑαυτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι	ὅτι οἱ μαθηταὶ τ' ἐξεπλήσισοντο τ' σφοδρὰ λέ- γοντες· τίς ἄρα δύναται σωθῆναι; 26 ἐμβλέψας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἵπαντα δυνατὰ τ' . 27 Ὅτε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφή- καμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι· τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν; 28 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ἑαυτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι	ὅτι οἱ μαθηταὶ τ' ἐξεπλήσισοντο τ' σφοδρὰ λέ- γοντες· τίς ἄρα δύναται σωθῆναι; 26 ἐμβλέψας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἵπαντα δυνατὰ τ' . 27 Ὅτε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφή- καμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι· τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν; 28 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ἑαυτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι	ὅτι οἱ μαθηταὶ τ' ἐξεπλήσισοντο τ' σφοδρὰ λέ- γοντες· τίς ἄρα δύναται σωθῆναι; 26 ἐμβλέψας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἵπαντα δυνατὰ τ' . 27 Ὅτε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφή- καμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι· τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν; 28 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ἑαυτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι



ἐπὶ δώδεκα θρόνους κρίνοντες τὰς δώδεκα φυλάς καὶ φυλάς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ.	ἐπὶ τ θρόνων ἰ-τάς δώδεκα φυλάς κρίνοντες <sup>2</sup> τοῦ Ἰσραήλ.
29 καὶ πᾶς ὅστις ἀφῆκεν ἰοικί- α καὶ ἀδελφοὺς ἢ ἀδελφὰς ἢ πατέρα ἢ μητέρα τ ἢ τέκνα ἢ ἀγροὺς <sup>2</sup> ἔνεκεν τοῦ ἰονόματός μου <sup>1</sup> , ἰἐκατονταπλάσιον λήμψεται	οὐδεὶς ἐστιν ὃς ἀφῆκεν οἰκίαν ἢ ἀδελφοὺς ἢ ἀδελφὰς ἢ ἰμητέρα ἢ πατέρα <sup>1</sup> τ ἢ τέκνα ἢ ἀγροὺς ἔνεκεν ἑμοῦ Γκαὶ Ὁ ἔνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, 30Γ ἔάν μὴ ἰλάβῃ ἑκατονταπλάσιον: Ὁ νῦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ ἰοικίας καὶ ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἀδελφὰς καὶ Γμητέρας καὶ τέκνα καὶ ἀγροὺς μετὰ Γ <sup>2</sup> διωγμῶν, καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζωὴν αἰώνιον <sup>1</sup> . 31 πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ ο[οί] ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι. ( <i>nr. 262 10,32-34 p. 224</i> )
30 Πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται ἰπρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι <sup>2</sup> .	καὶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσει. 30 Πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται ἰπρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι <sup>2</sup> . καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. ( <i>nr. 262 18,31-34 p. 224</i> )

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alleged addition of "good" to the young man's question about acquiring eternal life.<sup>31</sup>

The subordinate enclitic με and the emphatic ἄγαθον in Jesus' answer to the young man (Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19) show the nature of that answer. He called attention to the young man's light use of "good," not to His own relation to God.<sup>32</sup> Matthew knew this just as well as Mark and Luke and was not trying to provide a corrective or a differing meaning to the same question. Rather he was describing another question that was asked on the same occasion. That the young man fired a series of questions at Jesus is suggested by Mark's imperfect ἐπρώτα (Mark 10:17).<sup>33</sup> Matthew records one question and its answer while Mark and Luke record another. If it be objected that this explanation is artificial, there is precedent for one's repeating himself in different words on the same occasion precisely in this pericope. In Mark 10:24 Jesus is quoted as saying, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!" just after he has been quoted in Mark 10:23 similarly: "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" Those who so narrowly restrict conversations and discourses to only what is recorded in the gospels apparently have a distorted concept of what communication was like in these early times.

The young man asked it and Matthew recorded the young man's question in accordance with his desire to emphasize the importance of good works. This same desire appears in Jesus' words τῇρει τὰς ἐντολάς which Matthew alone retains (19:17). The others record, "You know the commandments" (Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20). Endorsement of the Mosaic law is a strong aspect of the first gospel throughout (5:17–20; 18:16; 23:23).<sup>34</sup> But this endorsement carries with it an emphasis upon obedience to that law, and Matthew chose this as one of his gospel's emphases. This accounts for the frequent denunciation of Jesus' opponents who burdened men with commandments which they themselves were unwilling to keep (23:4; cf. 11:28–30).<sup>35</sup> This issue is at the heart of the anti-Pharisaic attitude so clearly displayed in Matthew (e.g. 3:9; 5:20; 6:2, 5, 16; 23:1–36). These leaders stood for a superficial type of adherence to the Mosaic law

<sup>31</sup>Stonehouse proposes that Matthew was only trying to be more succinct in omitting the "good" from "Good Teacher," but this is hardly likely since Matthew is actually more wordy than Mark at this point. See Ned B. Stonehouse, *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 107–8.

<sup>32</sup>Warfield, *Christology and Criticism*, 104–7; Henry Barclay Swete, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956 [reprint]), 223.

<sup>33</sup>Warfield, *Christology and Criticism*, 109.

<sup>34</sup>Allen, *Matthew*, lxxvii.

<sup>35</sup>H. H. Esser, "Command, Order," *NIDNTT*, I, 335.

which did not reflect itself in the good deeds that the law required. So it is quite fitting in the framework of the first gospel that we read Jesus' response to the young man: "Keep the commandments."

The commandment in Matthew which is not found in the others is "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (19:19), a summary of the second table of the law (cf. Rom 13:9). This feature displays another emphasis in Matthew. The commandment from Lev 19:18 is in Mark and Luke only once, in the discussion about the greatest commandment (Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27), but Matthew uses it three times (5:43; here; 22:39). It cannot be doubted that Jesus himself placed great emphasis on this commandment. His half-brother James reflects the need to comply with it in his epistle (James 2:8), as does Paul in his two epistles about the righteousness of God (Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14).

It is, therefore, no surprise to find another of the Twelve, John, dwelling upon this commandment also. "The new ἐντολή of Jesus to his disciples is to love. It is given its deepest basis in Jn. 13:34. . . . They are to love one another as those who are loved by Jesus," writes Schrenk.<sup>36</sup> The foundation in John is Christological. This differs from Matthew who cites the occasions when Christ adhered strictly to Lev 19:18. John, in view of the Gentile background of his Christian readers in Asia Minor, had more reason to give as the measure of one's love Christ's love for believers. Matthew's predominantly Jewish readers were more accustomed to the precise terminology of the Mosaic law.

Another Matthean distinctive in his account of the rich young man reinforces Matthew's special attention to love for one's neighbor. It is his εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι (19:21). Perfection or completeness in keeping the commandments, Jesus tells the young man, is contingent upon his selling his possessions and giving the proceeds to the poor. On another occasion Jesus commanded completeness (τέλειος) such as is the characteristic of the Father (5:48). He was discussing love for one's neighbor on this other occasion also. Apparently, performance of this obligation represented the capstone of obedience in Matthew's eyes.

There is a sequel to Jesus' directive that the rich young man keep the *Mosaic* commandments. After one became Jesus' follower, Jesus directed that he keep *his* commandments: "teach them to keep all things that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20).<sup>37</sup> The "all things" that Jesus commanded doubtless featured this same commandment to love others. John the son of Zebedee, another apostolic witness,

<sup>36</sup>G. Schrenck, *TDNT*, 2. 553-54.

<sup>37</sup>Schrenck, *TDNT*, 2. 545.

assures us of this. Frequently he reminds his readers of their obligation by using the τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς combination (John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 2:3, 4; 3:22, 24; 5:3; Rev 12:17; 14:12) as well as the closely related τηρεῖν τὸν λόγον (John 14:23, 24; 15:20; 1 John 2:5; Rev 3:8, 10; 22:7, 9). The substance of Jesus' commandment or word to be obeyed was love for one another (John 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 2:3, 4, 7, 10; 3:11, 14, 18, 23; 4:7, 11, 12, 20, 21; 2 John 5). As verified by two firsthand reports, Jesus repeatedly told his own followers to keep his commandment of love for one another as he instructed non-followers to keep Moses' commandment of love for one's neighbor. This was one of those occasions when he did the latter, as verified by Matthew.<sup>38</sup>

### *Future Repayment for Following Christ*

The application drawn from this incident by Jesus is somewhat surprising. We might have expected something about the young man's loss of treasure in heaven because of his refusal to give to the poor (cf. Matt 19:21 and par.). Instead, however, Jesus focuses upon the hindrance of wealth in one's quest for salvation. Entering the kingdom, being saved, and receiving eternal life have equivalent meanings in this discussion.

Matthew's emphasis reflects the Jewish background of the constituency for which he wrote. This is seen by his choice of retaining "kingdom of heaven" (Matt 19:23) rather than "kingdom of God" (Mark 10:23; Luke 18:24) and his retention of the words about the Son of Man's throne and rule over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28).

"The kingdom of heaven" is a designation that can be traced through Jewish apocalyptic literature back to Dan 2:44; 7:13, 14.<sup>39</sup> This kingdom on earth will have its origin in heaven. The God of heaven will set it up, doing so through one like a son of man who comes with clouds of heaven. This Son of Man will have a universal dominion. Such was the hope extended by the OT to those Jewish people to whom the Messiah ministered. It would be a kingdom in which Israel enjoys primacy, but would extend throughout the world and include Gentiles as well.<sup>40</sup>

Matthew's orientation toward this future reign of Messiah is reflected also in Jesus' words about τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ (19:28). Just as he does in the Olivet Discourse (25:31), he tells of the Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory. Here only in Matthew, however,

<sup>38</sup>Cf. Riesenfeld, *TDNT*, 8. 144-46.

<sup>39</sup>Allen, *Matthew*, lxix.

<sup>40</sup>Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959) 279-80.

does Jesus reveal specifically that the Twelve will be repaid for their self-sacrifice by being placed on thrones with authority to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. To Matthew relevant rewards for leaving all to follow Jesus are entirely future. Such a role in the future Messianic age will be a repayment abundantly beyond whatever sacrifice has been made and will include eternal life as an inheritance (19:29). It is significant that Matthew chooses not to mention repayment in the present time such as is found in Mark (10:30) and Luke (18:30). The future of Israel was a dominant feature for him in light of the interests of his audience.

The legitimacy of this motivation is not to be questioned. In other words, Peter is not to be disparaged because of his question, "What then will we have?" (Matt 19:27). This does not reflect Peter's self-centeredness as M'Neile proposes.<sup>41</sup> It simply was a request for reassurance in light of what Jesus had just said about the impossibility of man's attaining his own salvation.<sup>42</sup>

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We have looked first at a proposed solution to the Synoptic Problem since this issue is foundational in any study of the Synoptic Gospels. That proposed solution, the Two-Source Theory, proved inadequate to answer one well established characteristic of the Rich Young Ruler passage, the phenomenon of the many agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark.

We then noticed a pronounced trend away from preference for the Two-Source Theory among today's scholars. This trend is in part attributable to the Matthew/Luke agreements. In place of the once almost universal adherence to the Two-Source Theory, some are turning back to Griesbach, others are proposing more complex systems of dependence in place of the currently espoused simplistic solutions, and still others are recommending the study of the gospels as independent literary productions. It was this last approach that was selected for the present study.

In implementing this approach, we found that two major emphases retained by Matthew from the life of Christ emerge. One was his insistence on works of love. This emphasis was reflected in a number of ways: the question about good works, the instruction to keep the commandments, the use of Lev 19:18, and the suggestion as to how the young man could attain the perfection or completeness of love.

<sup>41</sup>Alan Hugh M'Neile, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (London: Macmillan, 1961), 281.

<sup>42</sup>William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 729; John A. Broadus, *An American Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, (Philadelphia: American Baptist, 1886) 409.

The other emphasis was upon the future repayment to the Jewish follower of Christ. The Jewish background of Matthew's readers is reflected in his reference to the kingdom of heaven, the regeneration, and the twelve tribes of Israel. His preoccupation with future rewards in the Messianic Age is seen in his omission of any reference to rewards in the present age.

By way of conclusions regarding the procedure followed in this study, three observations are in order.

(1) It needs to be kept in mind that this type of study does not yield the total meaning of Matthew's account, only the special features that he alone has retained. He has much more material that is common to him, Mark, and Luke, such as the all-important injunction to keep on following Jesus. A danger in this type of approach could be to miss some primary emphases while straining to find what one writer emphasizes exclusively.

(2) This approach avoids erroneous conclusions such as might be drawn if it is assumed that one writer used another as his source. An obvious example from the present passage would be the possibility of inferring that Matthew had some special interest in maintaining the deity of Jesus because of an alleged alteration of the young man's statement and Jesus' answer. To be sure, Matthew *was* careful to teach the deity of Jesus, though not in this passage,<sup>43</sup> but so were Mark and Luke. Realization that Matthew did not use Mark as a source eliminates the misconception that this was Matthew's intention.

(3) There is not the least bit of implausibility in attributing the emphases of Matthew to Jesus himself. They fit precisely into the pattern of what we know about Jesus from other scriptural sources. To imply that Matthew invented them or imported them from another setting is pure conjecture and therefore has a very low coefficient of probability in a historical-literary study of the gospels.

One cannot help marveling at the vast amount of work yet to be done in bringing out the full contribution of each gospel to our knowledge of the life of Christ. Hopefully this small sample will stimulate an interest in pursuing that goal in the face of multiplying theories of skepticism. Only by accepting the gospels at face value can we hope to grow in our quest to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

<sup>43</sup>Warfield, *Christology and Criticism*, 107.



## THE OVERCOMER OF THE APOCALYPSE

JAMES E. ROSSCUP

*The problem of the identity of the "overcomer" in the book of Revelation has resulted in a multiplicity of interpretations. Interest in this issue has been heightened by a number of recent publications. However, only the view that all genuine believers are "overcomers," not only those who are "more victorious" in their Christian living, does justice to all the evidence. Thus, erroneous ideas of what it means to be an "overcomer" must be refuted. Maintaining the viewpoint that all true believers are "overcomers" also involves a defense of the doctrines of eternal security and of the perseverance of the saints.*

\* \* \*

IN Revelation 2-3, Christ addresses seven historical churches of Asia in which he discerns certain spiritual conditions. Similar conditions recur in churches that claim his name down through the centuries. In a letter to each of the seven churches he promises a specific blessing to every person who overcomes (νικάω, "to overcome," "be victor"). It is profitable to inquire into the nature of the blessing (reward) for overcoming, but the main purpose in this article is to address one question: *who is the overcomer* who receives the reward?

### A SURVEY OF MAIN VIEWS

The leading interpretations are:

*A saved person who retains salvation, which some forfeit*

Those persuaded to this view often hold that all seven promises pertain only to that number among the saved who finally prove

faithful, whether or not their commitment reaches martyrdom. In this interpretation, some who once were truly saved do not persevere; they forfeit the privilege of ever receiving the final reward, understood as eternal salvation, which Christ promises the overcomer.<sup>1</sup> A variation, however, is the position of Kiddle. He sees the overcomer as *especially* the martyr in all seven letters, and limits him *only* to the martyr in two cases.<sup>2</sup>

*A saved person who conquers, distinguished from a defeated Christian*

This interpretation is to the effect that the overcomer is only the more victorious believer, so only such a one will receive the rewards Christ promises. The saved person with much unfaithfulness mingled with some fruit in his life will still remain saved eternally. He stands simply to fail to gain aspects of reward that are held to be distinct from salvation, blessings sometimes claimed to be *in addition to* salvation,<sup>3</sup> which Christ assures to the overcomer. Evidence for the

<sup>1</sup>Guy Duty, *If Ye Continue* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1966), 148–55; G. H. Lang, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (London: Oliphants, Ltd., 1945), 91–108, especially 91–93; Robert Shank, *Life in the Son* (Springfield, Missouri: Westcott Publishers, 1961), 337.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Kiddle, *The Revelation of St. John* (Moffatt NTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963). Kiddle's two cases are Rev 2:26–28 (p. 42) and 3:21 with 20:4, 5 (p. 63). Only the martyr, having been fully proved and having fully proved his faithfulness, is assured "beyond any shadow of uncertainty" as to his immortality (p. 46; cf. also p. 62). Five of the promises are not alone to the martyr but to all the faithful among the saved. For example, *all* whose names are found in the Book of Life in the Day of Judgment are admitted into the New Jerusalem (2:7; 21:27; 22:2, p. 62). But the saved who do not persevere lose the "citizenship of the heavenly society" (p. 45; also 55), for they can yet be erased from the book (3:5; p. 62). The two cases Kiddle limits *only* to martyrs probably should not be so restricted. The promise of ruling with Christ (2:26–28; 3:21; 20:4, 5) seems to be a prospect for all of those among the saved, without excluding some (5:9, 10; 22:5). So 5:9, 10 and 22:5 expand on 20:4, 5. An analogy is the crown of life, promised to those faithful unto death (2:10). It is elsewhere assured to all who endure testing, without specifying *unto death* (James 1:12). Rev 2:10 can hold up the bright promise as a powerfully relevant encouragement in the crisis of martyrdom since Smyrna was one place where death was especially a peril for the saved. To be reminded of "life" which would overcome a martyr's death would be particularly meaningful when death could be so imminent. I. Howard Marshall, in evaluating and showing weaknesses of Kiddle's conception, argues rightly that blessings Christ promises the overcomer in Revelation 2–3 he pledges to *all* the redeemed in other passages of the Apocalypse (*Kept By the Power of God* [Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975], 453–54, n. 3).

<sup>3</sup>Donald G. Barnhouse, *Messages to the Seven Churches* (Philadelphia: Eternity Book Service, 1953). He reasons that eating from the tree of life (2:7) is for only *some* of the saved, a blessing "in addition to salvation" (p. 38); the crown of life is only for "the select few whom He chooses to suffer with Him, even unto physical death," or

third view, while not exhaustive, will hopefully show that this conception does not adequately account for the biblical testimony.

### *Every saved person*

All of the genuinely saved will turn out to be overcomers and receive the reward Christ promises them.<sup>4</sup> When Scripture is properly correlated, it supports this view. Considerations that point in this direction now follow.

#### SUPPORT FOR THE THIRD VIEW

1. 1 John 5:4, 5 more naturally favors this explanation. Verse 4 says that whatever has been born of God overcomes the world. The key to being born of God is believing that Jesus is the Messiah (v 1). The key to overcoming, whether in this rebirth or in matters that follow, is faith (v 4b). Every person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God is an overcomer (v 5), just as everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah has been born of God (v 1). Believing in Jesus as the Messiah and as Son of God appears also in John 20:30, 31. There, those who believe have life (cf. 1 John 5:10, 11, 13). And in John 20 as well as 1 John 5, the assertions embrace *every* saved person.

Verse 4 shows that John is not claiming that the person by virtue of what he is in himself automatically is able to overcome. The power within him, the dynamic of God's life, is what overcomes. "Whatever is born of God" features the neuter gender, and draws attention to the

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those otherwise faithful (2:10; James 1:12, p. 47). Cf. also p. 84. Barnhouse, discussing some of the seven promises, does not follow through with remarks that suggest any such distinction, but expounds the aspects of reward just as if he thinks they are blessings *all* the saved will receive. This poses a question as to his consistency (cf. 2:17, pp. 56-57; 3:5, pp. 74-75; 3:21, pp. 94-95). Or, Barnhouse simply does not comment, as in the promise of not being hurt by the second death (2:11, p. 47). Cf. for this view also several master's theses at Dallas Theological Seminary: Ralph D. Richardson, "The Johannine Doctrine of Victory," 1955, pp. 20-29; R. R. Benedict, "The Use of *Nikaō* in the Letters to the Seven Churches of Revelation," 1966, p. 13; Wm. R. Ross, Jr., "An Analysis of the Rewards and Judgments in Revelation 2 and 3," 1971, p. 20; Harlan D. Betz, "The Nature of Rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ," 1974, pp. 36-45.

<sup>4</sup>L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 3.306; W. Robert Cook, *The Theology of John* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 173-83; R. E. Manahan, "'Overcomes the World'—1 John 5:4," M.Div. Thesis (Winona Lake, Indiana: Grace Theological Seminary, 1970), 38, 39; for a longer categorizing of views, cf. 28-43; William Newell, *The Book of Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1935), 42, 52, 339; John R. W. Stott, *What Christ Thinks of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 97f., 118-25; Lehman Strauss, *The Book of the Revelation* (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1964), 108; John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 1966), 59 (2:7) and 98-99 (3:20).

very principle of overcoming "in its most general and abstract form."<sup>5</sup> It lays special focus on the victorious *power*, not the person himself. But in v 5 the focus turns to "the person who overcomes the world." *God himself* is the resource of victory as in 4:4: "You . . . have overcome them; because greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world" (cf. Christ as overcomer in John 16:33; Rev 5:5; 17:14).

In v 4, literally, "For whatever has been born and is born of God (perfect tense) overcomes (present tense) the world." John adds: "and this is the victory that has overcome (νικήσασα) the world—our faith." The aorist can refer back to a definite act of victory over the world by faith at conversion, or any past resolute act or trend of rejecting error in doctrine after conversion (1 John 4:4), or a past by-faith life-style of having overcome the world gathered up as a whole, and, of course, including the other instances of overcoming (cf. ἔγνων in 4:8). The last appears more probable in view of the perfect tense for being born, a fact that still stands true, and the present tense for a customary pattern preceding the aorist in v 4.

Verse 5 goes on to utilize present tenses, quite plausibly customary or iterative presents, to denote the general overall pattern of overcoming for the Christian who believes in an ongoing sense (v 1, πιστεύω, present tense) that Jesus is the Son of God. Later, in Revelation 2–3, "he who overcomes" is virtually the same as "he who believes." As Robertson says: ". . . *nikaō* [is] a common Johannine verb. . . . Faith is dominant in Paul, victory in John, faith is victory (1 John 5:4)."<sup>6</sup> John also uses the present tense of νικάω in Revelation 2–3, suggesting that continuing victory is characteristic of the saved just as continuing faith is (1 John 5:1).

Does every saved person in fact overcome in the Christian struggle? In the biblical sense, yes. The context emphasizes attitudes of commitment that continue. For example, "whoever loves (v 1b, present tense) the Father who begets loves (present tense) the one begotten by him," i.e., another saved person. Verses 2 and 3 stress that Christians manifest their love by love for God and obeying him. This obedience is not an irksome burden. The "for" which connects v 4 with v 3 links overcoming in v 4 with obedience through love in the Christian life that follows one's initial act of faith and his new birth. A distinction between two genuine Christians would not be that one overcomes the world in the present tense way that John means and the other does not. Rather, both overcome though one may overcome to a richer, more thorough degree than another. And any Christian might overcome to a further degree as he matures in Christ.

<sup>5</sup>Stott, 174.

<sup>6</sup>A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in The New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman, 1930), 6.300.

2. 1 John 4:4 shows that the "little children" have "overcome them," i.e., every spirit of antichrist in the world. "Children" (τέκνα) and "little children" (τέκνία) are common Johannine words for *all* believers. In 1 John, these words refer to *all* of the saved except for "children" of Satan (3:10) and possibly in 2:12.<sup>7</sup> Most instances definitely mean *all* of the saved (2:1, 28; 3:1, 2, 7, 10, 18; 4:4; 5:2, 21).

God's power is the resource for overcoming; as John claims: "greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world" (4:4b). Reasonably, "you" finally applies to *all* of the saved, in that the resource of the Lord being greater is not limited to a special class among the saved. The contrast is between the saved—*all* of them—and those of the world.

3. Rev 21:7 refers to any saved person. "He who overcomes shall inherit these things." The context conveys the natural impression that blessings the overcomer inherits are for *any* saved person. God shall dwell among his people (v 3); he wipes away every tear (v 4); there is no death, mourning, crying or pain (v 4); he makes all things new (v 5). The passage distinguishes most naturally between only two broad classes. If an interpreter claims he finds a third group, he reads it in from a preconceived system, not from a natural exegesis of what the text says. First, the text refers to the person who overcomes, inherits, and is a son of God (v 7). Then, it immediately contrasts those clearly unsaved, cowardly, unbelieving, who are not inheritors of the city but inhabitants of the lake of fire (v 8). The same contrast between *two* categories of people appears in these climactic verses (21:27; 22:11, 14, 15). In 21:27, *all* whose names are in the Lamb's book of life are marked off from any person who is "unclean" and "who practices abomination and lying." Those in the Lamb's book apparently have practiced a clean, godly life since being saved (cf. 3:4, 5; 19:8; also cf. Titus 2:11ff.). That involves overcoming, though saints can differ in their degree of overcoming and in the suitable degree of reward!

So it appears that, in distinction to the unsaved, John means that "he who overcomes" is *any* saved person. He is not one of a special class among the saved, a spiritual victor in contrast to a saint who is supposedly not a victor.

<sup>7</sup>In 2:12 the word *possibly* refers to the same group as παῖδια in v 14. If so, John addresses the believers by three designations in the same order, 1-2-3, 1-2-3. In v 18, παῖδια seems to mean *all* the believers. If τέκνία in v 12 means all the born again, it of course would fit well with our view in 4:4. Even if it distinguishes *one group among* the born again, the recent converts (a sense different from its usage in the rest of 1 John), it would not actually detract from our view. This is because τέκνία has well-established reference to all the born again everywhere else in 1 John (except 3:10). And 4:4 appears to bear this sense.

4. The overall concept in 1 John gives one confidence that John thinks of *all* who are born of God as overcomers. Real obedience can assure one that he indeed knows Christ (2:4). A person who hates a brother in that pervasive, continuing pattern that John's present tense embraces in a sweep is not a bona fide Christian. He *never* was, for John carefully tells us that he "is in darkness until now [or even now, i.e., he is *still* there]" (2:9). John does *not* say that he is in darkness in some particular experience of the moment only. Later, not only some of the saved but "every one" who has his hope in Christ purifies himself as Christ is pure (3:3; cf. Titus 2:11ff.). He does that in the dynamic of faith which overcomes (5:4, 5), enabled by the One within him (4:4b). Faith sets the desire at work within him to be like his Savior. At the same time, "anyone" who does not practice righteousness in the present tense way is not of God (3:10).

John insists that in "every one" who is a Christian there will emerge distinct characteristics of an authentically overcoming life. These are characteristics such as obedience, loving a brother, purifying the life, practicing righteousness, and being kept from the evil one (cf. 5:18). The frequent present tense suggests an overall trend of life. This is not a set, static mold but dynamic. It allows for growth; it does not denote absolute, sinless perfection now! In fact, while John insists on marks of a Christian life-style for one who has eternal life, and even boldly claims that one who is born of God does not sin,<sup>8</sup> he

<sup>8</sup>This may be variously explained. Zane Hodges relates 3:6, 9 to the saved "when he is viewed only as 'abiding' or as one who is 'born of God.' That is, sin is never the product of our abiding experience . . . of the regenerate self per se." He adduces Rom 7:20-25; Paul sins, yet can say "It is no longer I that do it" (*The Gospel Under Siege: A Study on Faith and Works* [Dallas: Redención Viva, 1981], 60). H. Bonar argues that "cannot" (as 3:6) need not deny absolutely that a thing can occur but that it is "wholly against the nature of things," e.g., Matt 7:18, "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit" contrary to its nature, though it sometimes does; Mark 2:19, men "cannot" fast while the Bridegroom is with them; it is incongruous and unnatural; Luke 11:7b; 14:20; John 7:7; 8:43, etc. (*God's Way of Holiness* [Chicago: Moody, (n.d.)], 99; similarly, though arguing differently, R. E. O. White, *An Open Letter to Evangelicals* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964], 86). I. H. Marshall refers 3:6, 9 to what the Christian *ought* to be, his *ideal character*, free from sin insofar as he abides; it is an eschatological fact, conditioned on "if he lives in Christ" (*The Epistles of John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 180-84). Cf. John R. W. Stott's arguments against an *ideal* view (*The Epistles of John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964], 132-34). Stott himself favors a common view that the present tenses refer to sin as an overall, habitual pattern without the victory that Christ gives when he is within (pp. 131-32). C. C. Ryrie, a colleague of Hodges, inclines to this view ("The First Epistle of John," *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, ed. C. Pfeiffer and E. F. Harrison [Chicago: Moody, 1962], 1473; similarly Leon Morris, "1 John, 2 John, 3 John," *New Bible Commentary: Revised* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970], 1265; A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in The New Testament* [Nashville: Broadman, 1933], 6.222. Sin as a *pattern* also appears to be in



is aware that acts of sin can break into the experience of real Christians (1:9, 2:1, aorist tense twice; 3:3, implied possibility). But, while aggressive for a godly life-style, he shows that God in Christ has graciously made provision to forgive and cleanse sin when the one born of God does falter (1:7, 9; 2:1, 2).

5. If in Revelation 2–3 God will admit some saved persons into eternal blessing but not the aspects of reward meant for the overcomer, these chapters never spell out what *their* aspects of blessing will be. The curtain of silence drawn on a distinguishable future for a non-overcoming group of the saved provokes a serious question. Does such a saved group, which is to gain some reward distinct in its essential nature from that of committed believers, in fact exist?

The rest of the Book of Revelation does not mark off such a group in a convincingly recognizable way. A multitude of overcomers in 15:2 partake of certain privileges beyond this life. If some of the saved in heaven have not overcome, God never definitely distinguishes them as being in a special category and extends them any encouragement, such as "You at least have eternal life; you will dwell in the presence of the Lord forever." The book nowhere identifies *any* saved who enter into *any* kind of ultimate blessing except those naturally understood as overcomers, who are marked by obedience to the Word of God (as 3:8, 10; 6:9; 12:11; 13:8; 14:9–12; 22:7, 9, 11). Passages which say directly that eternal life is free (1:5; 7:14, 21:6; 22:14, 17) are no exception to this. They can be grasped in relation to their contexts, rather than misconstrued in isolation or in inept correlations with other texts. Other verses in the contexts nearby usually refer to the life-style that the people of faith live, which manifests the faith that received the gift and works in channels of committed love, as in Gal 5:6 (22:7, 9, 11, 12). In 21:6, access to the water of life is "without cost." Yet in 7:9, 15–18 access to the springs of the water of life is a blessing after the saints wash their robes in Christ's blood and

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view in Gal 5:21, where it can keep a man from inheriting God's kingdom in that it reflects lack of faith that works through love (5:6). John Murray relates 1 John 3:6, 9 to the sin of rejecting Christ, denying that he has come in the flesh, that he is the Son of God, a specific sin as in certain other texts (John 9:41; 15:22; 1 John 4:2, 3; 5:1, etc.) ("Definitive Sanctification," *Calvin Theological Journal* 21 [1967] 10–13). Murray, however, does not sufficiently explain the present tense, which John uses often in contrasts between *godly* aspects and *sins* in general, such as loving or not loving (cf., for example, often in 3:4–10 which contrasts sons of God and sons of the devil, as compared with the aorist tense twice in 2:1).

Sin sometimes does not appear to be *the specific sin* Murray has in mind. Any of the above views is compatible with the concept that every saved person is an overcomer. At this juncture it appears best to see true elements in each view but agree most fully with Ryrie and Stott; to argue sufficiently would demand another article, but cf. Stott's rather detailed reasoning.

come out of great tribulation. The saints involved indeed "paid the price" in terms of commitment that lived out faith, being true to Christ's cause; but they did not pay any "cost" in the sense of *earning* or *meriting* access to that water of life! Jesus paid it all by his blood (7:14)!

NT passages outside the Apocalypse refer to *all* of the saved in terms which classify them as victors *in other ways*. So they are plausibly victors in their *life-styles* as well, in some vital degree. Paul sees all the saved as victors over death (1 Cor 15:54) and over every threat in general (Rom 8:37). His statement in 8:37 follows in context after 8:14 which shows what characterizes the saved: "as many as are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." Paul is convinced that those persons are true sons of God who are led by God's Spirit. If this characteristic reveals the real sons, the life-styles of the sons evidently feature some degree of overcoming.

6. There are reasonable solutions to the problems of this preferred view. Many reactions turn out to be "straw men" made from the stuff of misconceptions about how certain details best integrate into a harmonious, overall picture.

Take, for instance, this claim: many who are saved do not, in fact, overcome. Evaluation: If we do not decide by rare cases like death-bed converts or the thief on the cross, we may still acknowledge that *every* saved person with normal time and opportunity fails to overcome some or many times in his life-span following his new birth. All fall short of absolute, sinless perfection. Still, the real point is that the Bible by its terminology describes the saved person as belonging within a general class of people. He follows in the direction of faith toward God in the thrust of his life. Christ's words embrace *all* the saved, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me . . ." (John 10:27). Admittedly, these sheep are inconsistent. At times they wander, follow at a strained distance, or temporarily go in the opposite direction from God's will, as in Ps 119:176. Jonah is a further example. Yet Jesus did not hesitate to define his people, *all* of them, as those who "hear" and "follow." These words in the present tense look at more than the initial act of faith alone. They do look at this, to be sure, but also survey the sweep of their lives, the basic direction and bent of character and action. The sheep persist despite failures along life's trail. Some true followers of Christ may overcome to a lesser degree than others, but all fit within the panorama of Jesus' words.

Hodges unfortunately diminishes the statement of John 10:27 into a myopic either/or logic: ". . . the term 'follow' is simply another Johannine metaphor for saving faith. . . . It is a mistake to construe the word 'follow' in John 10:27 as though it indicates something about the future of the believer's experience after he receives eternal

life. In fact, it has nothing to do with it at all. . . ."<sup>9</sup> This does not appear to hold up because:

(1) "Follow" in its usage applies *both* to the first step in responding to Christ for salvation *and* to the subsequent process of the life as believers. The word "to follow," ἀκολουθεῖω, often appears to relate to the entire sweep of obedient discipleship and is not confined only to initial salvation in John's Gospel (8:12; 10:4, 5; 12:26, "follow" seems co-extensive with "serve"; 21:19, 22, both refer to Peter *after* he was saved initially). The other gospels use the term also in a far wider sense than only the beginning step of faith (Matt 4:20; 8:19, 22, 23; 19:27, 28; Lk 9:23, "daily"; 9:57, "wherever you go"; 9:62, following Jesus involves putting one's hand to the plow and going on with it along the furrow; 18:28; cf. Rev 14:4, etc.). "Hear" and "follow," like the word "abides" in John 6:56, even become *characteristics* of the truly saved.

(2) It is grammatically natural, in view of present indicative actives ἀκούουσιν and ἀκολουθοῦσιν, to relate the statement even to general life-style. To bind the verbs *only* to the initial act of faith appears shortsighted.

(3) Relating the verbs to *ongoing* lives fits the natural, pastoral metaphor of "sheep" that Jesus selects (10:2-5). A shepherd put his sheep out for the day and then went ahead of them. They "heard" and "followed" him, not simply in the first act of coming after him but for all day and many days.

(4) Hodges draws a questionable conclusion as to Jesus' placing his promise to "give them eternal life" (v 28) *after* "hear" and "follow." He reasons that if "hear" and "follow" relate at all to believers *after initial salvation* the order of the promise demands that believers must have followed to *earn* the eternal life. But contrary to his fears, "hear" and "follow" pose no element incompatible with eternal life through grace. The order is similar to that in Matt 19:29. There, to all who in faith sacrificially have left houses, lands, and loved ones for Jesus' sake, he will give many times as much (Mk 10:29 and Lk 18:29 say *in this life*) and eternal life. While from one perspective he can give eternal life already now initially in grace, he can also promise life in its full potential for blessing in its ultimate, crowning sense as the greatest prospect of grace that can encourage believers. A life of faith that works through obedient love leads on to the finest realization of all that is worthwhile; it can never turn out to have been in vain!

This interpretation is more reasonable than Hodges' system, which sees eternal life now as a free gift but construes eternal life in its future aspect as "a reward merited" by obedience.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Hodges, *Gospel Under Siege*, 44-45.

<sup>10</sup>Hodges, *Gospel Under Siege*, 82.

Some reject the view this article defends on another claim. They misconstrue it as tantamount to saying that none of the saved can backslide. Lang charges: "It avoids and nullifies the solemn warnings and urgent pleadings of the Spirit addressed to believers, and, by depriving the Christian of these, leaves him dangerously exposed to the perils they reveal. . . ."<sup>11</sup>

Evaluation: First, it is a "straw man" argument to insist that the logic of the favored view means none of the saved can backslide. Actually, while all the truly saved will be overcomers, all can and still do commit sins in this life (James 3:2). Never in this life will they scale heights beyond the need for further purification from sins (1 John 3:3). Christ has made provision for this need when they sin (1 John 2:1, 2). Some flounder in sad seasons of spiritual failure, but do not *lose* salvation even if for a time they seem no longer to have it. New revivals may be needed to stir them afresh to a closer walk with God, but Christ's marks of his true sheep are that they "hear" and "follow." The overcoming vitality of God-given faith (cf. 1 John 5:4, 5) and care as a practical dynamic doggedly continues to reassert itself in their experience (cf. Ps 119:176). And in a total lifetime as believers God's people will, despite times of decline, bear some fruit (Rom 6:22).

Second, a trait of true faith is that it gives a heart to heed God's warnings, gain victory (1 John 5:4, 5), and forge on with him. Those whose believing on the Savior is backed by reality continue with him, as in John 8:31 and John 15:1-6.<sup>12</sup> The truly saved ones are the brand of people who, when they sin, confess, seek God's forgiveness and cleansing, and desire to live in the light with God (1 John 1:5-9). If they are negligent here, God may take them home to heaven early (1 Cor 11:30-32). That those who "believed" in John 8:30, or at least some among them, were not genuinely saved is the natural import of Jesus' words directly aimed at his audience in the following verses (vv 31-49). While "believe" in the Gospel of John usually refers to true faith, the term can even be used for a superficial belief that does not turn out to be properly based and genuine (2:23; 7:31; 12:42; cf. 6:66).

Third, the favored view allows the possibility that some may for a time be thought to be true believers, yet not heed the warnings, and end up unsaved. This does not reveal that they *lost* salvation but that they *lacked* it all along. This is true despite the fact that they professed allegiance to the Lord, as in Matt 7:23 and 1 John 2:19.

<sup>11</sup>Lang, *Revelation*, 91-92.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. J. E. Rosscup, *Abiding in Christ: Studies in John 15* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973); those in 15:1-6 who do not abide and bear fruit (v 15:2a etc.) are not saved and never were (cf. all the saved abiding in John 6:54, 56).

A further objection against the preferred view is the context of Revelation 2-3. This material concerns *churches*, *Christians*, and their *works*. So, the argument goes, the issue of salvation has already been settled and the passage cannot pertain to salvation; it only relates to *Christian* living of the surely *saved*. Evaluation: Christ is speaking to churches! But often NT passages which address believers weave in warnings that lift an appeal even to the unsaved. These, mingled among the saved, may fancy themselves as saved and be insensitive to their need. The tough words register a healthy, sobering effect on two groups. First are those who really are saved but are living in backslidden slackness. Second, some among the fellowships might not prove to have been in fact begotten of God. Their character, attitudes, words and works can betray their barrenness, and they stand in grave peril. So the issue of salvation can be relevant even in a *church* context. The lack of salvation's fruit and bearing of bad fruit can reveal men as counterfeit or at least place them under suspicion.

In the church at Pergamum "those who hold" the teachings of Balaam, who support idolatry and immorality (2:14), are probably not saved. One might, of course, allow himself to fall into immorality as David did, then recover in sterling repentance (Ps 51). Still, the NT even in *church* contexts associates a life pattern of immorality with the sobering peril of not inheriting the future kingdom. Failure to inherit the kingdom due to tolerating a sinfully indulgent life-style must mean that one will turn out not to be saved (1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:3-5; cf. n. 17). Also, other NT references to Balaam do not register the impression that we are to think of him as saved or as ever having been saved (2 Pet 2:15; cf. v 17; Jude 11<sup>13</sup>). Those in the church or under the influence of the church's message who follow the Balaam-like teaching of the Nicolaitans, if they do not repent, will find Christ waging war against them with the sword of his mouth (Rev 2:16)! Since the kind of war that Christ pursues with the sword of his mouth is later clearly against the "beast," "false prophet," and their unsaved hosts (19:11ff.), the guilty ones in the church context of Pergamum are likewise probably unsaved. They need to repent and gain the real faith.

Another criticism of the proposed view lies in the question: if all the saved are sure to overcome and receive the crown, why does Rev 3:11 warn lest one *lose* the crown?<sup>14</sup> Ironside, favoring a variation of view two as described at the outset of this article, held that

<sup>13</sup>Jude 11 combines the "error of Balaam" with "the way of Cain" and "the rebellion of Korah." Cain is unsaved unless 1 John 3:12 is misconstrued. Jude, by linking Balaam and Korah with Cain, suggests that he, assuming agreement with John about Cain, thinks them unsaved.

<sup>14</sup>Betz, "The Nature of Rewards," 36.



one *saved* man may “take” *for himself* the very crown of reward that another *saved* person might have gained.<sup>15</sup> He illustrates. A Christian gospel tract distributor, discouraged by seeing little fruit, gave up his ministry. Later he spotted another Christian man fulfilling his old task in the same vicinity. The man even handed *him* a tract. Smitten with heart-broken remorse, the recipient cried, “Oh, you have taken away my crown!” However, Rev 3:11 more probably refers to an unsaved persecutor who can “take” the crown from a person who has only a professed relationship with Christ and his church. The victim permits an enemy of his soul to first seduce him away from committing himself in true faith, and then from living the life of faith that leads on to the crown (as James 1:12; Rev 2:10, indeed all the crown passages). So the seducer does not by his work against Christ’s cause take the crown *for himself*. He *prevents* his victim from gaining it. A person even in the church membership or attendance may fail to gain the crown in that he turns away from the things Christ summons him to face steadfastly. When put to the test, he denies the Lord and the faith. And so, having never genuinely received the free gift of eternal life to begin with, he fails finally to secure the crown which consists of eternal life. Christ promises this crown to those trusting him in real faith that results in faithfulness (2:10; cf. Eph 2:10).

This interpretation differs from Ironside’s and is the probable meaning of 3:11 because: (1) False leaders diverted many in the OT (Ezek 22:25–28) and the NT (Matt 24:11; Gal 5:7; Col 2:4; 2 Tim 2:17, 18; Rev 2:14, 15, 20–25). (2) Rev 3:11 is similar in thrust to cases where men *prevent* others from an effectual relationship with God and entering into his kingdom (Matt 23:13; Luke 11:52). (3) The exhortation to “hold fast what *you have*” is compatible with the preferred view. Those surely saved *will* heed the exhortation, persevere, and hold what they do have. But others, though mingling in a local church and claiming a relationship, do not genuinely possess it (cf. Rev. 2:24; 3:4 in context). They are allowing someone opposed to God to take from them—to prevent from being theirs in reality—what they could have by true faith. So far they only *think* they have the reality (cf. Luke 8:18). (4) God can *take* away a man’s part from the tree of life (Rev 22:19). He does not take it *for himself*, but prevents the man from gaining what potentially might have been his, because the person has not really grasped the privilege by faith. Rather, he has worked against God.

To be finally deprived of the crown does not infer, then, that a person at one time was genuinely saved and qualifying for it but later is not. The idea is not the forfeiture of salvation one has. It is the

<sup>15</sup>H. A. Ironside, *Salvation and Reward* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers [n.d.]), 31–32.



tragedy of losing out on what potentially might be given. None of the truly elect will turn away from Christ and fail to heed his warning and persevere: all will gain the crown that the context specifies, namely "the crown which consists of [eternal] life" (Rev 2:10).<sup>16</sup>

Still a further objection to the favored view is this. Exhortations in Revelation 2–3 can be relevant only for the *saved* because the Bible never makes an appeal to the *unsaved* about works. For the unsaved works are *not* the issue. God's summons to them is to believe. Evaluation: This generalization overlooks much in the Bible. Certainly it is true that no man can merit salvation by works. Yet this is not incompatible with another emphasis, that God calls on men to do the works they can do by faith if they only will respond to God's grace. God appeals to Cain (Gen 4:7), and Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:27). John the Baptist calls on religious but unsaved men to bring forth fruit that corresponds with repentance (Matt 3:8). Paul is concerned for those at Corinth, some of whom may prove to be "rejected" (ἀδόκιμοι), not having Christ in them (2 Cor 13:5–7).

Then, some reject this view due to what they believe about church membership. They reason that the standards Revelation 2–3 describes for the overcomer fit *some* Christians but are not true of *all* of the saved in churches. They do not imply this with regard to churches that do not pervasively teach the Bible, but Bible-teaching churches. Scores in these churches do not appear to experience anything that convincingly links them with an overcoming life. Yet, the logic assumes, they *must* be saved. Evaluation: Scores do not appear to know this overcoming life, but all *genuine* Christians do, at least in some degree. Even in the days of Jesus, John, and Paul, many punctiliously bound themselves to certain forms of belief and conduct. But they lacked the reality with God that real faith fosters.

Others react against the proposed view by rejecting a caricature, a straw man they have erected. They imagine that it requires unrealistically that a Christian measure up to an ideal, super life to be a real Christian and an overcomer. Evaluation: As in other NT descriptions of Christian living (i.e., abiding, being a disciple, serving, following Christ as sheep, mortifying the flesh, loving Christ, enduring trials,

<sup>16</sup>The *Father* and *Christ* secure the saved in their hand from falling out of salvation. No one will pluck them out (John 10:28, 29). Christ defined his "sheep" as those who "hear" and "follow" (cf. Sect. 2, No. 6 of this article), not implying that such sheep can be lost again if they cease to persevere, as if they may not persevere, but to assume that they surely do persevere. God's preservation further assures their perseverance. One has to read into the passage what it does not say to have it teach that some defined as true sheep may, *on their own initiative*, fall, jump, or wiggle out of God's hand. Christ also prays for preservation of the saved (John 17:11, 12, 15, 24), as he prayed Peter's faith would not fail, and it did not, though sorely tested (Luke 22:31, 32; cf. Rom 8:34).

etc.), the difference between two real Christians is not that one is overcoming in the overall picture while the other is not. The real difference is that one is overcoming to a fuller, deeper, or more thoroughly consistent degree than the other. The extent of Christian commitment, maturity, receptivity to the Word of God, and abandonment to God's will enter into this matter. Two bona fide Christians may be at widely different stages of growth in regard to these and yet both be overcoming, manifesting the fruit of faith to men or to God or both in differing degrees, measure and consistency.

A final objection is this. The "crown of life" supposedly denotes a special capacity to enjoy "eternal life," sometimes said to be distinct from or *added to* "eternal life" that every saved person will have.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Cf. this and similar views in Benedict, "The Use of *Nikaō*," 13–15; Ross, "Rewards and Judgments," 19–20; Hodges, *The Hungry Inherit: Refreshing Insights on Salvation, Discipleship, and Rewards* (Chicago: Moody, 1972), 113–14, 119; and Hodges, *Gospel Under Siege*, *en toto*. Hodges insists rightly that eternal life is free to the sinner. Then he has a problem with the concept that Christ promises aspects of reward to the overcomer as encouragements for discipleship that can be costly (*The Hungry Inherit*, 114). He distinguishes truly committed believers who will *inherit* the future kingdom from other saved men who only *enter* it (cf. also his *Gospel Under Siege*, 115–16, 120). In Scripture, however, to "inherit the kingdom" and to "enter the kingdom" are, for all intents and purposes synonymous (B. Klappert, "Kind," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976], 2.387–88). Leon Morris defines κληρονομέου in 1 Cor 6:10 as "enter into full possession of" (*The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958], 97). G. Abbott-Smith defines the word "to inherit . . . possess oneself of, receive as one's own, obtain . . . of the Messianic Kingdom . . . and its blessings and privileges" (*A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956], 248). All the saved will receive = obtain = inherit the blessings, each in what God deems the appropriate degree, position, capacity, role of higher service (Rev 22:3) appropriate to the way in which they prepared for this in present service (cf. Luke 19:17, 19; 1 Cor 3:8, etc.). Yet God's rewarding is not strictly tit for tat but on an order of lavish grace that far exceeds any human calculation or any idea of earning. Observe the "hundred times as much," or "many times," and "eternal life besides" in Matt 19:29 with its parallels, and cf. 2 Cor 4:17f.

Another Hodges' distinction allows eternal life to be a gift to all the saved, but heirship and sonship *not* a gift, rather *earned* by only some of the saved through faithful living (*The Hungry Inherit*, 119). So, in Rev 21:6, 7 where we see *one* class, Hodges makes two (*The Hungry Inherit*, 113–14): one thirsts and receives freely as a gift the water of life, a second overcomes and inherits! This scheme fails to integrate both aspects as true of the *one* category of person who is both *in* the New Jerusalem and *inherits* it, who contrasts with a second class that is excluded in v 8. Actually, in Revelation 21–22 *every* saved person enjoys *every* blessing described in the context. Hodges brings his distinction into the text against the more natural sense of things the text sees as a unit. The NT is clear that eternal life is a gift, yet is compatible with this in saying that eternal life as this gift is the fitting blessed outcome of a way of life lived in faith through grace for the sake of Christ, his gospel, his kingdom (Matt 19:29 = Mark 10:29 = Luke 18:29; cf. Rom 6:22). Sonship is a gift when one is initially saved (John 1:12), like heirship (Rom 4:13). But alas, Hodges unveils another artificial distinction: all the saved will inherit glory, but only co-sufferers, overcomers will

The logic of this claim is that God does not confer eternal life as a blessing that can be called a reward for men being faithful in life's struggles; he bestows life as a free gift which they receive by faith. A Christian already "has" eternal life in the present tense (1 John 5:11, 12), whereas the "crown" refers to "life" Christians are to receive in a yet future sense. Evaluation: Eternal life is both, in a beautifully compatible relationship. It is a gift now and always (Rom 6:23), and it is, in its future, ultimate aspect, also the goal or outcome to which a life of sanctification moves (Rom 6:22; Gal 6:8), a life lived "for my sake" (Matt 19:29). Only those who genuinely do receive eternal life as a gift now will share in eternal life in its crowning realization at the Lord's appearing. And they are the people who now live a life with fruit to God in some real degree, a life which answers to the marks of genuineness that keep cropping up in 1 John (2:3, 4, etc.).

As to *merit*, eternal life is always a gift absolutely dependent only on the work of Christ. As to *manifestation*, the quality that is eternal life is expressed now and also is the final goal, outcome, or reward related to the reality of faith which lives the quality of life out into good works. These works are fruit of the eternal life genuinely already within (Rom 6:22). They are not *conditions* that merit eternal

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inherit in a greater, more special sense as *co-heirs with Christ* in Rom 8:16, 17 and 2 Tim 2:12 (*Gospel Under Siege*, 109–11). This idea melts when one sees that suffering with Christ affects *all* the saved in some degree and form in Rom 8:16, 17; 2 Cor 1:5; 2 Tim 2:11; 1 Pet 4:12, 13. John Murray says: "Joint-heirs with Christ" is not a loftier conception than 'heirs of God' but it gives concrete expression and elucidation to what is involved in being 'heirs of God'" (NICNT *The Epistle to the Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], 1.298–99). C. E. B. Cranfield says that "... συγγληρονόμοι δὲ χριστοῦ expresses the certainty of our hope. Our sonship and our heirship rest on our relation to Him, on His having claimed us for His own. But he has already entered upon the inheritance for which we have still to wait, and this fact is the guarantee that we too, who are His joint-heirs, will enjoy the fulfilment of our expectations" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, [2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975], 1.407). All the saved in the New Jerusalem reign with God and His Son (Rev 22:5; cf. the *throne of God* and of the *Lamb* in v 3). Biblically-valid thinking is that every son of God (= every saved person) is an heir, the one legitimate kind of heir of which the Bible speaks (Gal 4:7; Heb 11:7). Heirship links with grace (1 Pet 3:7), promise (Gal 3:29), and forgiveness of all the saved (Acts 26:18; Eph 1:7, 11). Saved Jews and Gentiles are fellow-heirs (Eph 3:6). Heirs are all the sanctified (Acts 20:32), and without sanctification *no man* will see the Lord (Heb 12:14). Everyone effectually called under the New Covenant is to receive the eternal inheritance (Heb 9:15), based on Christ's blood (vv 12, 14). All the saved will obtain the *imperishable* inheritance (1 Pet 1:4), which links easily with the *unfading* crown of glory (5:4). So Christ even speaks of inheriting eternal life (Matt 19:29; cf. Heb 1:14). Paul says that the ones who will not inherit the kingdom are the *unrighteous* (1 Cor 6:9f.), not a class of saved who are not so committed.

In view of biblical evidence rightly correlated, the overcomer/heir in Rev 21:7 is *any* saved person.

life but *characteristics* that manifest its presence. This is just as apples are not the conditions of the tree being an apple tree but the characteristics of the apple-tree nature. The blessings God gives to the overcomer as reward he does not tender with the understanding that the person has *merited* them in life's struggles or paid a price that *earns* them. Rev 21:6 shouts from the text that the water of life is "without cost" to the overcomer, though it cost God much. Yet this water of life is only one of various descriptions of blessedness celebrated in 21:3-6, and immediately v 7 relates God's *grace* and what it bestows with "the overcomer shall inherit these things." Contrary to any intrusion of the word "merit," what one receives for his overcoming—all of it—is "without cost!" So, we impose a distinction from our own errant logic that we cannot validly draw from the Bible if we imagine that we receive eternal life originally by faith through grace but receive the "crown of life" in the future because we *deserved* it on some order of merit-laden good works by faith. The process of the saved life is just as totally of grace as initial salvation (cf. 1 Cor 3:10a; 4:8; 15:10; Phil 2:12, 13). M'Neile rightly says from Matthew that "... since the opportunities for good actions are themselves a divine gift (xxv.14f.), service is a mere duty which cannot merit reward (Luke sxvii.9f.)."<sup>18</sup> Reicke emphasizes that it is "God's due to require our obedience and readiness on account of the advance we have already received from him, and this is pure grace, without any merits on our side. . . ."<sup>19</sup> Preisker reasons that anything one can ever do that God will accept as a legitimate carrying out of his will must be done in "living power . . . given by God."<sup>20</sup>

#### PROMISES TO THE OVERCOMER FIT THE FAVORED VIEW

Several blessings Christ assures to the overcomer definitely will be applied to *all* the saved. Others also fit very reasonably. A mere selection of examples should show that this is true.

##### 1. Rev 2:7

When man sinned in Genesis 3 the Lord barred him from eating of the tree of life "lest he live forever." Christ promises the overcomer that he will eat of this tree in the future (Rev 22:2, 14, 19). Whether the eating is a memorial of living forever, or enjoying some blessed

<sup>18</sup>Alan M'Neile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1915), 55.

<sup>19</sup>Bo Reicke, "The New Testament Conception of Reward," in *Aux Sources de la Tradition Chrétienne, Mélanges offerts à Maurice Goguel*, ed. J. J. von Allmen (Paris, 1950), 197.

<sup>20</sup>H. Preisker, "μισθός," *TDNT* 4 (1967) 718-19.

aspect of the eternal city that we do not yet understand, the blessing must be true of all the redeemed. In 22:14 it appears that all the genuinely saved partake. Why? First, the verse closely links access to the tree and admission into the New Jerusalem. God will admit all of the saved within the gates. If so, it is natural to assume that the other blessing as well is for all of the saved unless there is a compelling reason why it cannot be. Second, either of two readings in 22:14a fits very easily with the idea that all of the saved partake. Some manuscripts favor the wording, "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree. . . ."<sup>21</sup> This suits all the saved. When the Apocalypse refers to garments, it never refers to a group with unwashed or unclean robes receiving any of God's blessing. Those admitted into his presence are clad in washed garments (7:14); have not soiled their (spiritual) garments (3:4; 16:15); will walk with Christ in white linen (3:5; 7:9; 19:8).

Even another reading in 22:14 fits all the redeemed: "Blessed are those who do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree. . . ." This does not focus on the *way* they are saved, as if their doing runs up a score of merit. Rather it looks at their characteristic as the truly saved, the obedience that manifests the faith that takes God's gracious gift. It is like John 10:27, 28 where Jesus profiled his true sheep as those who "hear" and "follow" him. Both words, in the present tense, look at a continuing, overall pattern of commitment in faith lived out through faithfulness. Yet eternal life is God's *gift* (v 28)!

The Apocalypse consistently views those blessed in God's kingdom as people who kept his Word (1:3;<sup>22</sup> 12:17; 14:12; 22:7, 9). They

<sup>21</sup>The reading "those who wash their robes" (cf. 7:14, 1 Cor. 6:11) is favored by  $\aleph$ , A, ca. fifteen minuscules (1006, 2020, 2053, etc.), it, vg, cop, al. Another reading, "those who do his commandments," appears in the Textus Receptus, 046, most minuscules, it<sup>818</sup>, syr<sup>ph</sup>, h, cop<sup>bo</sup>, al. Bruce M. Metzger prefers the first reading, most notably because the Apocalypse elsewhere has τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολὰς (12:17; 14:12; also cf. τηρεῖν in 1:3; 22:7, 9), not ποιέω τὰς ἐντολὰς (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [New York: United Bible Societies, 1975], 765–66). (Ποιέω in 1 John 5:2 is not enough to offset this pattern.)

<sup>22</sup>"Blessed" (1:3) occurs seven times in the book. Some blessings are of the nature that all the saved receive (19:9; 20:6; 22:7); others fit a pattern of references that apply to all the saved (1:3; 14:13, blessing for tribulation saints but applicable to all the saved; 22:14); then 16:15 refers to a tribulation saint who is spiritually alert, agreeing with exhortations to watch, wait, or look. These sometimes appear in contexts developing contrasts between people who are not prepared, who turn out to be unsaved, and people who are prepared, who turn out to be saved (Matt 24:37–51; 25:1–13; 25:14–30; Luke 12:35–48; 1 Thess 5:6). References to wait also fit this pattern (Luke 12:36; Gal 5:5; 1 Thess 1:10), as do other passages about waiting where the context favors application to all the saved (Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 1:7; 2 Thess 3:5). The same is true of verses about looking (Phil 3:20; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; 2 Pet 3:12, 13; Jude 21).



persevered in fidelity because of that Word (1:9; 6:9; 20:4). This harmonizes naturally with the line of biblical truth that keeping God's commandments is a hallmark of the saved.<sup>23</sup>

In 22:19, to be excluded from the tree sounds like being barred from a privilege any saved person is to enjoy. The person God denies is not a saved, albeit unfruitful person who misses special reward, set in contrast to a fruitful one who gains that reward. He is unsaved, regardless of his profession, so God distinguishes him from the saved.

## 2. Rev 2:11

The overcomer will not suffer "hurt" by the second death. This is a privilege of all the saved, whether or not they become martyrs, the peril that looms in this passage. Faithfulness in trials, even when martyrdom is not a result, leads to the crown of life, as James 1:12 shows. But the crown of *life* (positive) and avoiding the second *death* (negative) still have powerful relevance to any of the saved who face the imminent threat of sealing their testimonies with their blood. An example close at hand is "Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death among you" (v 13). Christ exhorts his people, when subjected to this extremity, to be faithful, inspired by his consolation here. After they have laid down their physical lives, God assures them the triumph of eternal, spiritual life; and they will not experience the ultimate death which is unutterably worse than physical death. They, with Paul, can exult that "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor 15:54). And they can say, "O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?" (v 55).<sup>24</sup>

An effort to argue that *only some* of the saved are overcomers who gain this crown is based on the idea of being *hurt* or *injured* (ἄδικέω) by the second death. The logic is that a saved person who is not an overcomer can be *hurt* by this death in a sense which the saved man who is an overcomer eludes. Benedict supplies the example of a saved person in jeopardy of becoming a martyr at the hands of unsaved men who are destined for the second death. Should that believer recant and deny Christ, the second death would "hurt" him. In what sense? Benedict explains: "he would thus forfeit the crown of life, and be in that sense injured, hurt, or affected by the second death."<sup>25</sup> He holds that the person remains saved but loses out on gaining the special crown, a reward distinct from salvation.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. Ps 37:34; 103:18; Ezek 18:9, 21; Dan 9:4 (a verse that links loving God with keeping his commandments, as Jesus does in John 14:15, 23; cf. also 1 John 2:3-6); Matt 19:17; Lk 8:15; 11:28; John 8:51; 15:10; 1 John 3:24; 5:2, 3; Rev 3:8, 10.

<sup>24</sup>The promise in Rev 2:10 is much like Jesus' reassurance in Matt 10:28-33. Note the similarity between "fear not" (v 28) and the phrase in Rev 2:10.

<sup>25</sup>Benedict, "The Use of *Nikaō*," pp. 14-15.



This does not have the ring of truth. When John uses ἀδικέω he always refers to inflicting direct, positive "injury" on some object (Rev 6:6, 7:2, 3; 9:4, 10, 19; 11:5). In the strained view above, the "injury" is not that of the death itself, directly, but in being prevented from receiving the crown of life, which is indirect. The problem with this is that wherever the second death elsewhere affects a person it affects him *directly, fully, eternally*. He is actually placed *in* it (20:6, 14). Also, the second death in Revelation 20 is a destiny absolutely opposite to eternal life (note the "book of life"), that life which is the privilege of all the saved. It is not death set in contrast to life thought of as a special, added reward for only a part of the redeemed, which is the meaning that Benedict proposes for the "crown of life."

Also, the genitive phrase linked with the crown in various passages is probably a genitive of apposition: "the crown which consists of [eternal] life," i.e., life in its final, consummative, fully-realized sense (James 1:12; Rev 2:10); "the crown which consists of [eternal] glory" (1 Pet 5:4); "the crown which consists of [ultimate] righteousness" (2 Tim 4:8).<sup>26</sup>

More persuasively, then, Rev 2:11 harmonizes with the concept that *every* saved person overcomes.

### 3. Rev 2:17

Christ promises hidden manna. The main views permit the manna to be a reward for *all* the saved. To Ladd it is a figure depicting admission to the Messianic feast, the Messiah's kingdom.<sup>27</sup> Others see the manna as a symbol for Christ, the bread of life, getting their cue from John 6:50f., 53–58.<sup>28</sup> If so, Christ is "hidden" in that we do not now see him (2 Cor 5:16; 1 Pet 1:8), but shall see him when he comes for his saints (1 John 3:1, 2). Such explanations go well with the idea that *every* saved person will be an overcomer and receive such a reward that Christ guarantees to the overcomer.

### 4. Rev 2:17

Any view of the "white stone" yet proposed has some difficulty for those who do not take the view proposed here. We cannot be dogmatic about what Christ meant, but if the "hidden manna" is a reward for every saved person the "white stone" in the same verse probably also is. From the background of Greek and Roman customs

<sup>26</sup>D. E. Hiebert, *The Epistle of James* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 98–99; Alexander Ross, *The Epistles of James and John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 32.

<sup>27</sup>George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 49.

<sup>28</sup>Stott, *What Christ Thinks*, 65.

arise such possible meanings for the stone as vindication, acceptance, identification, and honor as a victor. Any such idea suits *every* redeemed person.

Suppose, then, that eating the "hidden manna" is but another way of picturing what can also be represented as the joyous boon of feasting at the Messianic banquet (cf. Rev 19:9), experiencing the delights of the eternal kingdom. Just so, the "white stone" could represent a complementary idea—acceptance, identification with Christ, or honor in that kingdom (cf. Rom 2:7).

Even if the background for the stone is in *Israelite* custom, we can have a meaning that relates to every saint. Manna can picture God satisfying His people's needs in contrast to foods associated with false gods that do not satisfy lastingly (Rev 2:14). One of the many possibilities for the point of reference for the white stone in Israelite history is plate stones on which God inscribed his moral will. This could be directly relevant in Revelation 2 to sins at Pergamum committed against God's moral standard (vv 14–23). As the overcomer received and honored the Word disclosing God's Person and will, Christ assures that he is to receive the ultimate disclosure of God's Person and will. His symbol for this is the "white stone."<sup>29</sup>

With either a Graeco-Roman or an Israelite background, then, the stone can portray a blessed reward possessed by *all* of the redeemed.

### 5. Rev 2:26–27

Christ will give the overcomer authority over the nations, to help rule them with a rod of iron. Quite naturally the rule relates to every saved person.

In Rev 5:9, 10 all of the blood-bought of all nations are a kingdom and priests. They will reign on earth. In 20:4–6 all who

<sup>29</sup>Others think of the white stone as like the "Urim" fitted within the fold of the high priest's breastplate, in which were twelve stones (Exod 28:17ff.). Each stone was inscribed with the name of a tribe of Israel, and represented that tribe as present before the Lord in the bond of the covenant. In this view the "Urim" may have been a "white stone" or diamond on which God's secret name was written. It would symbolize a position of priestly prerogative before the Lord. If so, the promise suits *any* saved person, for all are priests (1 Pet 2:5; Rev 5:10). Stott leans to this position (*What Christ Thinks*, pp. 65–67). Moses Stuart proposed still other high priestly background for the stone ("The White Stone of the Apocalypse," *BSac* 1 (1843) 469–76). The white stone is a precious stone comparable to the gold band gracing the high priest's mitre with the words "Holiness to the Lord" (Exod 28:36ff.). Every overcomer, a priest, will bear the name of Christ the Lord, corresponding to the OT "Jehovah," which none but the high priest knew how to utter (p. 473). Stuart says the new name is the Logos (p. 476). His idea is consonant with every believer being an overcomer, but is not without problems. Christ says that it is a *white* stone, which does not correspond convincingly with a *gold* band; Christ says nothing of a headdress, etc.

belong to the "first resurrection"—to that classification of resurrection—reign with Christ for a thousand years.

All who have exercised the spiritual commitment of v 4 (loyalty to God's Word and to God rather than to the beast and his image) will no doubt share in the millennial reign. Other passages show that a general characteristic of the saved is that they keep the Word of God. This obedience is evidence that they truly love God.<sup>30</sup> And in the ultimate blessedness, *all* the saved reign eternally (22:5) as surely as they all enjoy other aspects described in 22:3–5.

In view of this it is reasonable that *all* the saved rule with Christ. We should not restrict this reward only to an elite, more faithful group among the saved.

To venture outside the Apocalypse for a moment, it is of interest to note that even in this life Paul expects *everyone* who has been justified to reign in life by Jesus Christ (Rom 5:17). He looks for faith's fruit with respect to sanctification to show up in every justified life (6:22f.; 7:4, 6). To him, the life of being led by the Spirit is God's norm for *all* (not some) of his authentic sons (8:14).

Suffering with Christ is an experience common in varying degrees and forms to *all* the saved, all who will someday be glorified (Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 4:17; 2 Tim 2:12).

Returning to the Apocalypse, authority over the nations is in terms of an iron-like rule over them. The psalmist predicts such rule for God's anointed One (Ps 2:9), and John envisions this as realized in Jesus Christ (Rev 12:5; 19:15). The primary focus of the ruling with a rod of iron seems to be on the authority demonstrated in subjugating the peoples. In comparison with Christ's strength, the nations are weak and fragile. He shatters them (cf. Exod 15:6b).

This primary idea seems correct for two reasons. First, the illustration in Rev 2:27b portrays *destruction*. Similarly, Jeremiah shattered a vessel into bits to illustrate what the Lord by his authority would do in judging Jerusalem in 587/86 B.C. (Jer 19:11). Second, Rev 19:15 locates this phrase, ruling with a rod of iron, in a context

<sup>30</sup>The truly saved love God (Exod 20:6; Ps 91:14; 97:10; 145:20; Matt 19:16–26; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 16:22; 1 Pet 1:7, 8; 1 John 4:7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 20). Keeping God's Word manifests love for him (John 14:21, 23–24; 1 John 5:2). It is not surprising, then, that Jesus can speak of keeping the commandments in the same breath with entering into life (Matt 19:17). Apparently he means that faith, which receives God's gift, expresses itself in fidelity to his Word, just as Paul speaks of faith that works through the channel of love (Gal 5:6). So, one enters into life and he avoids death by a proper response to the Word (John 8:51). And keeping the Word is involved when one fulfills aspects of God's will, such as in 1 Tim 1:19; 5:22; James 1:27; Jude 21.

<sup>31</sup>Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967), 471: "... its mention here is perhaps suggested by the former clause; the victor's share in the Messiah's conquest over his enemies may suggest the glory that is to follow."

of authoritative judgment at the second advent, prior to the description of Christ's millennial rule in chapter 20.

The idea that the saved will exercise dominion with Christ over the nations emerges in Rev 19:14. Armies of heaven accompany Christ at his second advent. These, arrayed in white, are conceivably the believers dressed in white linen earlier (v 8), angels (15:6), or all of these. They share in the Lord's iron-like, devastating victory over the beast and his armies. The believers in Christ's armies are "the bride," that is, the saints, not just saints allegedly victorious as distinguished from spiritually barren saints.

So, the reward which Christ pledges to the overcomer in Rev 2:26, 27 he will apparently provide for *all* of the redeemed.

#### 6. Rev 2:28

Christ will confer the morning star to overcomers. Many think this is a symbol of Christ, who will come shining with glory to inaugurate his kingdom (Matt 24:30; 25:31, 2 Thess 1:9). The star depicts the Messiah who has risen out of Jacob (Num 24:17). The fact that Christ styles himself "the bright morning star" in Rev 22:16 enhances this meaning. Just as the morning star is the harbinger of the dawn and shows that the full light of the day will soon brighten the earth, Christ in his coming will usher in the day of abundant Messianic glory (2 Pet 1:19). He will give himself as the "morning star" to the person who keeps his works (Rev 2:26), an idea in principle essentially like John 14:21. There, when a person obeys Christ's word, Christ manifests *himself* to him.

A similar view makes the star a symbol of believers' victorious glory in the future day.<sup>31</sup> The godly will shine as the stars (Dan 12:3); appear with Christ "in glory" (Col 3:4); be glorified with him (Rom 8:30; 2 Thess 1:9, 10). Good angels, too, are called "morning stars" (Job 38:7), because they can manifest bright glory (cf. Rev 18:1). Believers are also to shine brightly, whether as the stars or the sun (Matt 13:43; cf. 4 Ezra 7:97).<sup>32</sup>

In either view above or in the two combined, *all* saints will share the reward which the morning star portrays. It is arbitrary to restrict this reward to certain of the saved, as if only they overcome, and deny it to others as though they do not overcome.

<sup>32</sup>Believers are to shine as stars not only in Dan 12:3 but in the Pseudepigrapha: 1 Enoch 104:2; 4 Ezra 7:97, their faces are to shine as the sun and they are to be made like the light of the stars; v 125; cf. also 1 Enoch 62:15, 16, the righteous shall be arrayed in garments of glory and life; 2 Bar 50:1-4; 51:3, 10.

7. *Rev 3:5*

Christ will clothe the overcomer in white garments. The Apocalypse describes *all* the saved as finally arrayed in white. The blessing is for all who are part of the "bride," not confined only to the more fruitful (19:8). The martyrs taken to heaven appear in white (6:11a). These have overcome, as shown by faithfulness to the Word and their testimony (v 9). In the perspective of the book, the only ones eligible for the overcomer's blessing from the Lord are those who have been true to him. The burden of proof is on the interpreter who imagines that some who are truly saved are not faithful, that they do not have some degree of godly victory in the overall trend of their lives since they were initially saved.

In a passage about saved people during the tribulation (7:9ff.), it is said that they "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb." *All* are cleansed by the blood. And so, apparently, whether the saved during the tribulation suffer as martyrs or survive while maintaining spiritual integrity, all alike have washed their robes in the blood.<sup>33</sup> And the blessings they enjoy (vv 15–17) are of the nature that *all* the saints receive. They are in God's presence (cf. John 17:24), serving him (cf. Rev 22:3), no longer suffering from hunger, thirst, etc. (cf. 21:4).

The overcomer in 3:5 is one of those in v 4 "who have not soiled their garments." This pictures keeping their spiritual lives clean in a walk with the Lord (cf. James 1:27). It is similar to "the righteous acts of the saints" in 19:8. All true saints have these righteous acts (cf. 1 John 3:4–10), and fittingly God will commemorate this with a heavenly dress, whatever it finally means.

The saints' ultimate worship in principle answers to the call to "Worship the Lord in holy attire [in the splendor of holiness]" (Ps 96:9). God constitutes all the saints priests before him (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 5:9, 10), so his principle is to array them consistently with his own decorum for priests: "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness" (Ps 132:9a; cf. v 16; Isa 61:10). Two words in Psalm 132 apparently are interchangeable—righteousness and salvation<sup>34</sup>—since

<sup>33</sup>Rev 7:4–8 most naturally speaks of literal, saved Jews and 7:9ff. expands to the saved of all nations; 7:9ff. depicts blessings beyond this life that even saved Jews will receive. Indeed, 7:16–18 sounds like the spiritual boon God promised Israelites in Isa 49:10, which in principle expands also to the saved of all nations.

<sup>34</sup>And so the reward in its general sense is the crown which consists of eternal life (James 1:12; Rev 2:10); which consists of eternal glory (1 Pet 5:4); which consists of righteousness in its ultimate sense (2 Tim 4:8). All of the saved will belong to a sphere that features these realities.

the second part of both vv 9 and 16 is the same. But God who garbs the righteous will also clothe his enemies—with shame (v 18)!

In Rev 3:5, then, the overcomer is any saved person.

Another aspect in 3:5 is Christ's promise to the overcomer: "I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Benedict says that passages about Christ confessing or not confessing men contrast two categories among the saved. They are "promises of reward or loss of reward for *discipleship*,"<sup>35</sup> assuming a system in which really committed believers are disciples and other saved people are not. But the evidence actually supports a different distinction: Christ will confess all the *saved* but deny the *unsaved*.

Evidence for relating the last part of 3:5 to all the truly saved is as follows. First, Luke 9:26 makes it clear that a person's salvation is very doubtful if he can be described as ashamed of Christ and his words. The biblical pattern says that the saved keep Christ's words or some wording to the same basic effect.<sup>36</sup> Second, in Luke 9:24, 25, salvation appears to be involved in Christ's words: "... whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." Only Christ finally can save, to be sure, but men save themselves in that they heed the invitation to salvation and then see that they go on with Christ (Acts 2:40; 1 Tim 4:16). Luke 9:25 probably refers to failure to gain salvation when it says, "For what is a man profited, if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?" Third, the term "denied" in Luke 12:9 more naturally fits with the view that Christ will not regard such a person as saved: "but he who denies me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." Fourth, confessing Christ is definitely related to genuine faith and salvation in Rom 10:9, 10. Since this passage clearly casts confession of Christ in the context of relationship, the probability is strong that in the other texts as well the person who confesses Christ is saved and the person who denies him is not. The contrast is not between a spiritual Christian who confesses him and a carnal Christian who does not. Fifth, while the meaning of 2 Tim 2:12 is not in itself unequivocal, to deny Christ most probably refers to the unbelief that springs from an unsaved mind-set. Christ denying a person probably means that he rejects him at the future judgment. This is evidently the case, since v 11 is no doubt dealing with a person really saved as distinguished from one who is not. The saved person indeed has died with Christ and will live with him! Further, to endure (v 12) is a mark of the redeemed person. And it has already been pointed out that all of the saved will reign with Christ (Rev 22:5).

<sup>35</sup>Benedict, "The Use of *Nikaō*," 33–34.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. nn. 23, 30.



The evidence, then, supports the conviction that in Rev 3:5 the overcomer Christ confesses is any saved person. The man Christ will deny is not a saved man who is unfruitful; he is the unsaved man, even if a professing church member!

Another relevant problem in Rev 3:5 is Christ's promise not to remove the overcomer from the "book of life." Those who believe that saved men may lose salvation (view 1 above) connect the idea of removal with this loss.<sup>37</sup> Others suppose God records all men in the "book," but removes those who fail to become saved.<sup>38</sup> A preferable view is that Christ records *only the saved*<sup>39</sup> and promises never to remove them. Reasons supporting his preservation of these follow.

(1) He makes no direct statement that he will delete a name once it is in the book. That he implies the possibility is not certain enough to be the basis for a view. Even what seems to some to be implied can be explained from the standpoint of a contrast between a human, earthly, public register from which men remove names after physical death and God's book from which names are not scratched. Christ's point is that the insecurity that men know prevails in this world will not happen with regard to this spiritual book. An analogy is 2:10, 11. A Christian can face *physical* death, but assuredly will never suffer the *second* death. Christ pledges his security. In 3:12, one can go out of a present, earthly temple, but the overcomer will *not* go out of the spiritual, eternal temple of God. Christ pledges his security.

Similarly, the OT has registers of names in this life (Ezek 13:9; Exod 32:32, 33; Isa 4:1, 2; Jer 22:30). These are lists on this earth among men (or Exodus 32: *God's* list of the physically living) which keep a person's name until he dies; then his name is scratched out as no longer pertinent. In Ps 9:5 God has blotted out names of the wicked in destroying them physically from this life. Ps 69:28 can be understood in different ways. It may refer to *God's* awareness of those physically alive; *human* records of the living (Dan 12:1?); a

<sup>37</sup>Cf. nn. 1, 2.

<sup>38</sup>Strauss, *Book of Revelation*, 120; Walvoord, *Revelation*, 82-83.

<sup>39</sup>That *only* the saved are ever listed in the "Book of Life" is proved by various factors. (1) Some passages speak of being written in heaven (Luke 10:20; Heb 12:23), a unique privilege of the saved. (2) Other texts speak not of being written in heaven, but being in the book of life. These, too, convey the strong impression that only the saved are so recorded (Phil 4:3; Rev 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27). No one unsaved is ever directly said to be in this book *now*, to *have been removed*, or to *have once been* in it but not so now. (3) Some references speak of unsaved as not written in the book. They do not hint that they were *ever* in it (Rev 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15); the unsaved are shown not to be listed here; it seems to be eisegesis to suggest that they were *in* it but *later removed* when they failed to receive Christ. The texts do not say or intimate this. In Rev 21:27, only those *in* the book may enter the New Jerusalem; it does not refer to those who *remain in* the book, as if they once were in it but did not continue.

*human* list of the unrighteous who die and God's list of the godly (Dan 12:1?) from which he withholds the unrighteous; or *God's* book from which he blots out unsaved but retains the godly.<sup>40</sup> Only in the NT do references appear that unequivocally mean a "book" of God pertaining to eternal life.

(2) The promise embraces every "overcomer," admitting of no exceptions. Every person who believes with true faith and has been born again is an overcomer (1 John 5:1, 4, 5). So, if every born again person is an overcomer, and no overcomer will be blotted out of the book, no born again person can be removed.

(3) The phrase immediately linked with the book, "I will confess his name," is Christ's promise that he will be loyal to all the truly saved as in other NT teaching already discussed.

(4) Johannine passages teach that God keeps securely all those truly saved (John 6:37-41, 54 with 56; 10:27-29, 1John 5:18).

(5) Rev 3:5 agrees with a scriptural pattern which immediately links a positive promise with a negative promise to teach a truth even more emphatically (John 5:24, 10:28, 29, etc.). The negative aspect does not drape a shroud of doubt over the saved man's security; it erects a further pillar of support against a further consideration.

#### CONCLUSION

1. All of the saved are overcomers according to biblical terminology and exegesis.

2. Reward promised to the overcomer in Revelation 2-3 fits very well with the conclusion that all the saved will receive such reward. The distinction between two categories of the saved will not be that one receives the reward and another falls short of it. Rather, both receive it, yet each in that distinguishable degree, position, capacity, or role that befits his case as God sees it. Both enjoy in common the fully satisfying sphere of reward in general depicted by various terms, e.g., the kingdom, eternal life, glory, inheritance, etc. And both enjoy in common the blessing that such a promise as hidden manna or the white stone picture. Yet with that general blessedness that God bestows on all the saved, each has reward in a more particular sense in that degree, position, capacity or role of fellowship in holy service (Rev 22:3) that suits his case.

<sup>40</sup>This last opinion is not probable in view of clearer, more direct NT statements (cf. n. 39).

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Birthright: Christian, Do You Know Who You Are?* by David C. Needham. A Critical Concern Book. Portland: Multnomah, 1979. Pp. 293. Paper, \$6.95.

"The fundamental concept of this book is that you, as a born-again person, are—in your deepest self—in perfect agreement with the will of God" (p. 137). In maintaining this contention, Needham rightly objects to the old "two-nature" theories which have often used the term "nature" as though it were synonymous with "person." But, in my opinion, he is painted with his own brush. He comes nearer to making two persons of the believer than the "old" view ever did. He repeatedly refers to what man is in "his deepest self, his truest self," his "essential" being, his "innermost" being, his "deepest identity," his "deepest sense of personhood," his "true self," "the authentic you," "the person I now most deeply am," as never desiring to sin (p. 155)! All this is in contrast with one's "flesh," his "mind flesh," "the outer man," the "flesh level of personhood," and the "old flesh," from which our evil inclinations arise. But these latter are not really and truly *me*, he says.

And further, Needham says, the "flesh self" and the "old self" must be carefully distinguished. The "old self" no longer exists. The pre-regeneration person no longer exists (p. 113)! One wonders, in this approach, who was saved? It wasn't *me*, because the old *me* *does* not exist and the present *me* *did* not exist. Jesus didn't really save the "me" that exists now! Is our union with Christ in his death presumed to mean that we are now different persons who did not exist before? (This is in spite of the fact that Christ is not a different person who did not exist before his resurrection—and neither are we because of our union with him.) For Needham, the new man (apparently a new metaphysical entity?) is in reality a member of a new species (pp. 47–48)! All these word games are played without "rules" defining what is meant by such basic concepts as "person," "nature," "regeneration," etc. (there is a brief and inadequate discussion of the word "nature" in an appendix). Since there is no bibliography one may be pardoned for wondering whether Needham has read the good discussions by Relton, Buswell, Showers, and others on these issues.

Why does not the same logic which refuses to allow sin as a real aspect of *me*, also refuse to allow it as a real aspect of the fallen Adam? After all, it was an intruder in his nature, even more than in mine! In addition to the problem of placing my sin somewhere outside my "truest self," there are numerous other problems in this book.

For example, Needham argues that the signs and gifts mentioned in the NT may also be seen today (pp. 199–201). This, of course, makes nonsense of the biblical reference to the "signs (proofs) of apostleship" (2 Cor 12:12). If all believers are supposed to do these things, how could they be signs of apostleship?

He also asserts that both Peter and Paul say that "the *only* thing" you will leave behind when you go to heaven is your mortality (emphasis added). But it may be bluntly affirmed that they do *not* say this. If all we leave behind is the mortality of body ("flesh"), and if my sin does not lie within the real intrinsic me, it is difficult to avoid a "matter is evil" dualism. Needham *says* that he avoids this, but his argument is neither clear nor persuasive.

A major part of Needham's argument is that either I myself, or some aspect of me, ceased to be active at my regeneration. Since I still exist, just who or what this was is never made clear. It certainly was not my body, and I presume it was not my soul/spirit—so I don't know what it was! His argument on this point (death is cessation) forces him to redefine death as a "cessation of function of whatever dies," and spiritual death as involving "a total *cessation* of the one entity that is dead—one's life in relation to God" (p. 255). Thus the entity that goes out of existence is not really an entity, like a person's body, or spirit, but a relationship. In addition to the obvious logical problems with the term "spiritual death," this view does not tell us what entity went out of existence at our regeneration. But Needham likens our fear of our old man, who has ceased to exist, to our fear of a dead snake which has ceased to exist (p. 255)!

Needham accepts the non-traditional interpretation of 1 John 1:6–10 as set forth by Peter Gillquist in *Love Is Now* (p. 263). It is my opinion that whenever these concepts ("fellowship" equals salvation and "confession" is for salvation) are adopted they are generally associated with unorthodox or at least divergent views of progressive sanctification (and in Needham's case, of prospective sanctification).

Another problem is his denial that OT saints were regenerated (and his consequent misunderstanding of the new covenant promises). The Grace Theological Seminary Th.D. dissertation by Dr. John Davis has adequately dealt with this doctrine and I will not further respond to it.

Of course a sinner is radically changed at regeneration! Of course his basic character is affected. Of course it is proper to speak of a believer as having only one nature if the term is used to mean a "complex of attributes" which characterize an individual, and if this "complex" includes *all* the characteristics, good and bad, which describe that individual. But this does not disallow the use of the term as an abstraction to label various complexes of attributes such as that complex due to my Adamic inheritance. Even Needham's mentor, Martin Lloyd-Jones, so uses the term (see p. 251). (One may speak of *the* nature of Jesus as being the God-man [including all his characteristics], yet also speak of his divine nature and of his human nature.) Of course the word "sin" in the singular should not be understood as meaning "sin nature" (pp. 251–52), but having said all this, "one's flesh" is still an aspect of *himself* (his personhood). In attempting to avoid the concept of two natures (or persons) Needham has produced a kind of dualism in which there is some foreign (non-me) entity within me which draws me toward sin. But we are supposed to take comfort in the fact that the *real* me (my "truest self") doesn't desire to sin! And what is this *non-personal* depravity in me? I had always thought that neither rocks, trees, bodies, nor any other non-personal entities could be depraved and that only *persons* can be guilty of sin.

In reading this book one receives the impression that if he does not share Needham's approach he cannot have "true meaning" (a concept he repeatedly emphasizes) or experience real joy in his Christian life—or conversely that a failure to accept his view explains all such spiritual failure! To the contrary, I am sure that many Christians will be happy to report that joy, meaning, and significance are not dependent on the acceptance of Needham's views.

Needham's primary concern seems to be with improving a believer's self-image. He repeatedly argues to the effect that the traditional view he is opposing does not see "the relationship between sin and the fundamental issue of meaning which grows out of an awareness of identity" (p. 254)—whatever that may mean!

It is impossible to interact with the scores of statements in this book with which I must disagree. That would take a book longer than Needham's! I must simply say that I am unable to recommend the book. The book will confuse more than help. It is my opinion that it will lead both true believers and professing believers to depreciate or deny the real problems of sin in their lives. The exegesis it incorporates too often merely 'exegetes' words and phrases (such as "It is no longer I that do it") apart from their logical and theological connections in both the immediate and the biblical contexts. This simply means that he fails to recognize figurative expressions and analogies for what they are, figurative expressions and analogies.

CHARLES R. SMITH

*Testaments of Love: A Study of Love in the Bible*, by Leon Morris. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981. Pp. 298. \$12.95.

As might have been expected, this volume from the pen of Leon Morris is a deep reservoir of biblical data on love. This treatise is long overdue for at least two reasons, because (1) "there are so few studies of what the Bible means when it uses the term" (p. vii), and because (2) oftentimes "our idea of love is indistinguishable from that of the world around us" (p. 2). The former reason is corroborated by a drought of thematic studies which should be coming from OT and NT scholars (cf. pp. 4–7), while the latter reason is an indisputable fact of contemporary history.

Morris launches out into his ambitious project with a great deal of objectivity. He avoids careless proof-texting throughout by providing appropriate textual and hermeneutical notes. A truly biblical theology undergirds all syntheses. In addition, the volume is saturated with interaction with literature on the topic; however, the author does not always note the presuppositional divergencies of the authors of materials he cites. Consequently, he assumes a high level of discernment on the part of his conservative readership.

"Loved with Everlasting Love" (cf. Jer 31:3) is both the title and theme of chapter one. In this chapter the אָהַב word-complex as used of God is summarized. Morris' primary thesis is that "the constancy of his [i.e., God's] love depends on what he is rather than on what they [i.e., his people] are" (p. 12). Besides studies in Jeremiah, he appeals to the other prophets,



especially Hosea (cf. pp. 14–20). It is somewhat surprising not to find an extensive treatment of Deuteronomy 7 in this foundational chapter (he does have a brief treatment of it later; cf. pp. 89–90). Also, he only briefly refers to the important connection of covenant and love (cf. p. 28). Much more development is needed at this juncture.

There is also a reminder that the “biblical writers use other words that bring out other facets of love, and there are many passages that do not use any of the words for love but that are nevertheless important, because they describe occurrences that indicate God’s love” (p. 33). One of the most important sub-theses which Morris defends in this first chapter is “that there is a stern side to real love” (p. 25).

The same semantic group is examined from the human perspective in chapter 2 (“Man’s Love”). At the outset Morris exposes a prevalent but wrong generalization concerning אָהַב: “That the verb is used twenty-seven times to indicate men’s love for God and twenty-three times to indicate God’s love for men shows that it is incorrect to say that the root is ‘rarely’ used of the love of an inferior for a superior” (p. 36, n. 3). The command to love is introduced in this chapter as an extremely important biblical distinctive (cf. p. 40). Another pertinent conclusion flowing from an examination of the scriptural data is that “love and obedience go together” (p. 42):

Modern men usually regard fear and love as opposites, and these days there is a marked reluctance to see obedience to God’s commands as a response of love. . . . But the men of the Old Testament did not see things this way. . . . Joy and . . . love are the companions of a proper fear of God (pp. 58–59).

Chapter three brings אָהַב into the picture (“Love and Loyalty”). After pointing out the insurmountable difficulties related to translating this pregnant term (cf. p. 65), Morris offers an adequate survey of its occurrences and significance. He concludes that אָהַב denotes “both love and loyalty” (p. 70). As such, “in the Old Testament as a whole, *hesedh* is characteristic of God rather than of men. In men it is the ideal; in God it is the actual” (p. 81).

Chapter four, “Compassion and Delight,” deals with selected miscellaneous Hebrew roots which are conceptually parallel to אָהַב and אָהַב. The chapter provides a natural summary for the OT data:

It is clear, then, that love is one of the fundamental ideas of the Old Testament. It is conveyed by a variety of words, each of which has its own contribution to make to our understanding of the whole. Together they show that love has many facets — particularly God’s love. Two things about God’s love are repeatedly emphasized: it is constant, and it is exercised despite the fact that the people God loves are so unworthy (pp. 99–100).

“Love in the Septuagint” is the topic of chapter five. By means of usage surveys of ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in the LXX Morris suggests that a trend is discernible: “This examination shows that *agapaō* is much more significant for an understanding of love in the Old Testament than is *phileō*. This is true first of all because the term occurs so much more often, and secondly because it is found in contexts that better bring out the characteristic idea” (p. 111). However, he is careful *not* to suggest, as some have done, that there is a



significant semantic difference between these two Greek roots in the LXX (cf. pp. 111–12).

Prior to an examination of the NT data, the author presents in chapter six a very general but informative summary of the basic words for love in Greek literature (e.g. *στοργή*, *φιλία*, *ἐπιθυμία*, *ἔρος*, etc.; cf. pp. 114–23). Then the characteristic NT substantive (*ἀγάπη*) is introduced into the discussion. The impact of this phenomenon is best brought out in the author's comparison of *ἀγάπη* with *ἔρος*:

Perhaps as good a way as any of grasping the new idea of love the Christians had is to contrast it with the idea conveyed by *erōs*. . . . *Erōs* has two principal characteristics: it is a love of the worthy and it is a love that desires to possess. *Agapē* is in contrast at both points. . . . On the contrary, it is a love given quite irrespective of merit, and it is a love that seeks to give (p. 128).

"It is the cross that brought a new dimension to religion, that gives us a new understanding of love" (p. 129). This is not only the burden of chapter seven ("The God of Love and the Love of God"), but it is also the general (and valid) foundation of the remainder of the volume. Morris weaves together the evidence for this thesis from such key passages as 1 John 4:10, John 3:16, Rom 5:5–8, Eph 2:4ff., etc. (cf. also p. 135, n. 19) and concludes that "this is a formidable list, one that shows that the thought of God's love for those without merit is a dominant theme in the New Testament" (p. 129). Consequently, "the consistent teaching of the New Testament is that the love of God in Christ is prior to any love in man. . . . As the New Testament views it, the origin of love is always in God" (p. 148). Throughout this important discussion it is demonstrated that the love of God "springs from his own nature" (p. 164). This particular chapter is theologically preeminent.

The argument of chapter eight is not always convincing; however, its general thesis is acceptable: "The New Testament does not say in specific terms that God's love 'creates' love, but this is surely its meaning" (p. 169). Regarding this "answering love that spills over into love for one's fellowmen" (*ibid.*), one must not always assume a general application as Morris has done (cf. this chapter and "Love in First John," pp. 218ff.). It seems that the author has been influenced a little too much by the old theological rhetoric of 'love' for the 'brotherhood of man' (cf. e.g., the citations in his footnotes throughout these sections). On the other hand, the chapter contains excellent discussion of the connection of love and obedience along with a pertinent reference to Christ as our example in love (pp. 185ff.).

The best portion of chapter nine on "Love for Other People" is "Self-Love" (pp. 198–203). Therein Morris exposes a contemporary spiritual malady which is having devastating consequences today. He points out that "self-love is not commanded (or commended) in any of the places where it is mentioned. It is simply regarded as one of the facts of life" (p. 199). Self-love is the antithesis of *ἀγάπη*: "How can one give oneself to oneself . . . and not be selfish and self-centered?" (pp. 202–3).

"Love, Just Love" (chapter ten) deals with the NT occurrences of *ἀγάπη*/*ἀγαπάω* without specified objects. It is noted that "many of the absolute references to love seem to show that love is a way of life, the only

way for Christians" (p. 232). Among several profitable discussions is a very good exegetical presentation of 1 Corinthians 13 (pp. 239-59).

Chapter eleven, "The Love of Friendship," synthesizes the NT data relating to the φιλέω complex. From this data the author draws one major conclusion: "The striking use of *agapaō* for God's love for the unworthy is simply not found when we turn to *phileō*; (p. 263). However, "although they [i.e., the φιλέω words] do not establish the spontaneous, outgoing character of love as the Christian knows it, they fit in with that conception and help us see further aspects of it" (p. 266). It is also noteworthy that φιλέω compounds are sometimes used in warnings "about loves that should form no part of the life of God's servant" (p. 270).

Morris (pp. 271-79) recapitulates his major findings in his conclusion and certainly vindicates the motives which prompted him to write this biblical survey of love. A valuable set of indexes closes out the pages of this volume.

Apart from some comparatively minor content grievances, there are only two negative observations worthy of mention. The first relates to the organization of the book. Although the difficulty of trying to harmonize a biblical and systematic approach to such a vast topic as biblical love is acknowledged, many of the author's subheadings within chapters needed revision. At times the progression of the argument was not as clear as it could have been. This also led to some needless repetitions (and yet some of these were beneficial). A second criticism should probably be directed to the publisher. Due to the nature of this volume Hebrew and Greek typeset rather than transliterations would have been in order. However, these factors should not discourage the truly exegetical theologian from making *Testaments of Love* a "must" acquisition.

GEORGE J. ZEMEK, JR.

*The Development of Doctrine in the Church*, by Peter Toon. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979. Pp. 127. \$4.95. Paper.

Peter Toon of Oak Hill College, London has written an important book, and it will undoubtedly exert considerable influence among evangelical students of the history of theology in years to come.

It is possible to study the development of doctrine in the Church without even raising the questions of "why?" and "how?" It is possible to read everything from the Fathers to Barth without even considering a theory of the development of doctrine. It is also possible to set to sea in a ship that does not have a rudder.

Toon offers a rudder on this vast sea in his summary of the various theories of important scholars of the past century and a half who have concerned themselves with the *development* of doctrine and offers his own description of what that theory ought to be.

He addresses himself to "fellow evangelicals," and in seven chapters details the work of John Henry Newman, James Bowling Mozley, William Cunningham, William Archer Butler, Robert Rainy, Charles Hodge, Adolf von Harnack, James Orr, Benjamin B. Warfield, and the more recent views of contemporary or lately deceased Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars of the history of theology.

John Henry Newman professed to have an "evangelical conversion" in 1816. In 1890 he died as a Cardinal of the Roman Church. In between he had been an Anglican priest, a tutor at Oxford, and a leader of the "Tractarian Movement." But it is for his views of the development of doctrine that he is remembered here—and it was these views that eventually catapulted him into the priesthood of the Roman Church.

Newman struggled with the relationship of doctrine in Scripture to the development of that doctrine in the tradition of the Church. Early in his life he believed that the Roman Church had corrupted doctrine by adding to the system of theology produced between Nicea and Chalcedon, but eventually he came to believe that it was only the Roman Church which was the true successor of the apostolic church. He argued that if Athanasius or Ambrose were to "come suddenly to life, it cannot be doubted what communion they would mistake for their own" (p. 8). Regardless of the changes in the Roman Church since the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, Newman came to believe that they would be most at home, not in the Protestant communions of his own day, but in the ancient church of Rome.

Newman contended that the *idea* behind various doctrines was given in seminal form to the Early Church, and that through the ages these *ideas* were developed by the Church into present beliefs. Thus, while it is true that the Early Church did not maintain the doctrine of Mary that it eventually accepted (especially in the West), the *idea* was originally there, and that it was more or less legitimately developed. "Thus, Newman was able to see the same doctrines (in their most attractive form), which the Reformers and many of Newman's former Anglican colleagues had regarded as corruptions, as developments of the original idea of Christianity" (p. 13). Penance was developed from baptism, and the cult of Mary from the *theotokos* doctrine.

Newman's work was rebuffed by James Bowling Mozley, who found in such things as the Nicene Creed *explanatory* development, but not the development of accretion found in the Roman Church. About the same time, William Cunningham of the Church of Scotland pointed out that Newman's work was not even representative of the traditional position of Rome—that far from being a *development* of the Apostolic Church, the doctrines of Roman Catholicism were actually found in the apostolic era. He rejected the idea that God was controlling and guaranteeing the development of doctrine outside the Canon and maintained that there is development of doctrine legitimately only within inspired Revelation. While it is true that there was "early subjective growth in understanding such doctrines as the Holy Trinity and Christology" (p. 31) by the Church (as in the Nicene Creed), there was a parallel growth of corruption in doctrine, organization, and worship.

William Archer Butler came at the problem from another perspective. He was raised as a Roman Catholic, but later became an Anglican. He proposed a number of objections to Newman's methodology, among which was his contention that Newman's theory "confuses development with the work of systematizing and applying doctrine . . ." (p. 34).

Toon next turns to the contribution of Robert Rainy, who was associated with the Free Church of Scotland. Rainy asked the questions that have always been asked by theologians of the Church: "What are the conditions under which, and the limits within which the human mind may be warranted

in laying down doctrines? And how far can we reasonably think that the Bible was designed to furnish us with materials to be used in this way—to be fused and reproduced in these definite and invariable forms?” (p. 39). Rainy believed that doctrine was “a determination of what Christians believe to be true on the authority of the revelation they have patiently and prayerfully studied” (p. 41). Since the formulation of doctrine is thus a human enterprise, it is always open to improvement and refinement. This was as true for the generation immediately following the apostles as it is for any generation. He believed that creeds were useful, but that they must always be held subject to correction.

Toon then takes up the work of Adolf von Harnack, whose monumental *History of Dogma* is still very influential in the field. Harnack concentrated on the creedal formulations of the third and fourth centuries and based much of his work on his theory of the Hellenization of Christianity through the influences at work in those early centuries. Harnack “regarded the actual history of dogma as pathological rather than a normal or healthy process . . .” (p. 64).

On the other hand, James Orr, a Scottish Presbyterian, found real progress in theology in the course of the centuries. He propounded the theory that the development of doctrine proceeded in an orderly and logical way from the doctrine of God through man, Christ, the Atonement, the application of redemption, and eschatology. But Toon rightly points out that his system is artificial and can hardly be substantiated from the actual history of the Church.

The views of Benjamin B. Warfield are discussed next. Warfield saw theology as the inductive study of written Revelation, and he viewed its work as progressive and never finally accomplished. One can never stop doing theology unless he is arrogant enough to claim that he has perfectly apprehended all the truths of Scripture and their relations with each other.

In his fifth chapter Toon discusses some more modern responses among Protestants. He points out the recent discussions about the varieties of emphasis on various doctrines among the different writers of the New Testament. He shows how the Westminster Confession speaks to the issues of its day and raises questions about some recently-produced creeds. Out of recent Protestant (both liberal and conservative) theology Toon finds five important lessons for evangelicals (pp. 86–87):

1. Evangelicals should recognize that the unity of the New Testament (and of the whole Bible) is a unity in plurality, and that the problems involved in interpreting the Bible to create doctrine for today are real and not imaginary.

2. Evangelicals should accept the humanity, relative to historical and cultural conditioning, of both the Catholic creeds and, even more so, of the Confessions of Faith of Protestantism. To recognize the humanity of doctrinal statements is not necessarily to deny that they can be or are true in what they affirm or deny.

3. Evangelicals should acknowledge that all theories of homogeneous progress or development of doctrine are inadequate in the light of historical knowledge as it exists today.

4. Evangelicals should reflect on the fact that though they all profess a strong commitment to the inspiration and authority of the Bible, they still represent a wide spectrum of doctrinal interpretations—e.g., baptism.

5. Evangelicals need to realize that since the theological questions being asked today are not normally the same as those asked in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, there is often the need, and at some times more obviously than others, for contemporary confessions of faith.

Toon follows this chapter with one on recent Roman Catholic views of the development of doctrine. He discusses the work of Karl Rahner in his editing of *Sacramentum Mundi* and his *Theological Investigations*, now up to fourteen volumes in English. Rahner finds that all statements of doctrine are statements of the experience of the Church with God, and such statements are in the end always inadequate. Another Roman Catholic and Dutch theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx, "holds that whenever there is a faithful external presentation of the content of the implicit faith of the whole Church, then that presentation cannot be wrong" (p. 97). Thus, "true development of dogma is only possible in the whole Church" (p. 98). An American Roman Catholic, Gabriel Moran, finds that "God revealed in Jesus Christ is a mystery not because there is nothing more to say of him, but because there is always *more* to say" (p. 100).

In the final chapter of the book Toon offers "A Contemporary Evangelical View." He presupposes that "for Christians the only authoritative basis for faith and doctrine is the revelation of God of which the books of the Bible are the written, unique record" (p. 105). He finds helpful the distinction of Rainy "between divine truth or teaching as embodied in Scripture, and doctrine as formulated by believers" (p. 106). For Toon "development of doctrine involves the Church in careful exegesis of the texts and then the choice of the best available concepts and words within a specific cultural situation as the means of conveying God's message for that time and place" (p. 115). God's Revelation in Scripture is the paradigm; doctrinal formulations are successive elaborations of that paradigm in different historical and cultural contexts. Toon gives several criteria for testing the validity of these elaborations. He calls for modern statements of doctrine which are consistent with apostolic teaching and which speak in the language of modern cultures to their people.

One may not always agree with Toon or his assessments of others, but the exercise of reading his book is a good one. He summarizes vast amounts of literature in comprehensible form, and if the book accomplishes nothing else, it makes the reader aware of the Church's illegitimate tendency to canonize statements of doctrine intractably—whether the Creed of Nicea, the Westminster Confession, or the modern doctrinal statements of individual churches, church denominations, fellowships, and schools. Such doctrinal statements always must be way-stations only; they always must be open to change and refinement. It is Scripture that cannot be changed—not the human systemization of it.

Thus, Toon's work forces one to ask questions that evangelicals need to ask with considerably more frequency: From where did the system of doctrine that I believe come? Is it an entirely accurate formulation of what Scripture teaches? Where it is not, what am I going to do about it?



*The Search for Salvation*, by David F. Wells. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1978. Pp. 176. \$3.95. Paper.

*The Search for Salvation* is the second volume in InterVarsity Press's *Issues in Contemporary Theology* series. David Wells has given us an outstanding, readable survey of the differing theological approaches to the subject of salvation. The six positions surveyed are: Conservative (Evangelical), Neo-orthodoxy, Existentialism, Secular theology, Liberation theology, and Roman Catholic theology. The common struggle of each position is its attempt to define salvation for the present secular age. Unfortunately, the limited scope of the book prohibits a discussion of the theme of salvation in popular music, current literature, or recent films. Recognizing that these arenas represent the meaning of life and values for modern man as the professional theologian did in earlier centuries, it would have been quite valuable for these areas to have been developed.

Wells accurately pinpoints the twin presuppositions of Conservative theology as: (1) an inspired Bible and (2) the unity of the testaments. A brief synopsis is offered of the cross-work of Christ, salvation past, present, and future. He adequately clarifies the biblical faith and its distinction from recent trends.

The reader will certainly profit from Wells' correct distinction between Neo-orthodoxy and Existential Theology. In the first group, he places Barth and Brunner while assigning Tillich and Bultmann to the latter. The emphases of Neo-orthodoxy are God's grace, the Christological focus, and the objective triumph of the cross. Existential theology is concerned with the subjective emphases of existence and meaning. Often, these four theologians are lumped together into one group, but their approach to the matter of salvation, as in other areas of theology, is not to be confused. Barth and Brunner are much closer to the orthodox faith than either Bultmann or Tillich. Neo-orthodox theologians generally place the salvation history of the Christ-event within *Historie* while the Existentialists see this event as only *Geschichte*.

The chapter on Secular theology entitled "God in a Godless World" summarizes the form of theology that was so prevalent in the 60s. Harvey Cox, John A. T. Robinson, Paul van Buren, and Thomas Altizer, to name a few representatives of this group, popularized the "God is Dead" movement. Characteristics of this theology are the dismissal of the supernatural, the redefinition of Christ, and the reinterpretation of salvation in purely secular concepts.

Liberation theologies, the theology of hope, and so-called Christian Marxism are ably presented in the chapter concerning "Divine Politics." The final discussion concerns the recent developments in Roman Catholic Theology. Especially helpful is Wells' evaluation of Rahner and Küng. Evangelicals must pay close attention to the renewal prevalent among these men and their followers as they develop post-Vatican II theology. Our task is to determine the meaning of Küng's statements regarding justification by faith alone. Wells' conclusions are that "It is difficult to see how Rahner and Küng can validly argue that the reformer's views on these questions are essentially



the same as those of contemporary Catholicism when its nature-grace correlation is, but for some minor refinements, precisely what Luther and the other reformers rejected in the Catholicism of their day" (p. 155).

The book is an excellent summary of recent trends in the area of soteriology. It is well written and will provide a fine introduction to the various systems, especially for the beginning student. Without question, it will find a home in college and seminary classrooms as collateral reading. Its non-technical style also makes it very conducive for advanced study groups in the local church. The true strength of the book is the author's adept ability to evaluate carefully the strengths and the weaknesses of each position without either blind praise or reactionary criticism. The final conclusion, in which Wells wrestles with the different presuppositions of the dogmatic (conservative) and apologetic (existential, secular liberation) theologies, is well worth the purchase of the book. It is his hope that the groups might learn from each other in both the areas of content and methodology in order that the biblical truth may be presented to our world. This is indeed the task of the theologian of every generation. It goes without saying that I heartily recommend this book and look forward with anticipation to the remaining volumes of the series.

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*Christology in the Making*, by James D. G. Dunn. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980. Pp. 443. \$24.50. Paper.

James Dunn, reader in New Testament Studies at the University of Nottingham, has given us another important contribution to the field of New Testament Studies. Those who have followed Dunn's career will not be surprised by the quality of scholarship in this newest work. In it, Dunn investigates the beginnings of one of Christianity's most central beliefs, the doctrine of the incarnation.

The book appears at a time when Christology is at the forefront of theological dialogue in British scholarship. In the past three years, since the works edited by Hick (*The Myth of God Incarnate*) and Green (*The Truth of God Incarnate*), much attention has been given to the subject. However, these works have not approached the subject with the thoroughness of Dunn. The unique contribution of Dunn's work is his methodology. It is not a systematic theological study, but a work of biblical theology. Dunn cites material from both testaments, the apocrypha, and other Near Eastern literature in his inquiry. The massive research is almost overwhelming. There are 84 pages of notes alone and a vast bibliography of 49 pages in addition to a very comprehensive index. The book is indeed a very carefully formulated analysis of the data, especially the exegesis of the New Testament materials in their contexts.

Those who are familiar with Dunn's *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* will not be surprised at the lack of unity that Dunn sees in the

literature. There is, according to Dunn, a great diversity in the way the New Testament authors (or redactors) approached the subject of the incarnation. Dunn concludes that only the Johannine literature presents a pre-existent Christ or a developed doctrine of the incarnation. Dunn believes that pre-existence was a late development in the first century and grew out of the Johannine community. He says, "In other words, it is well nigh impossible to escape the conclusion that the pre-existence element in the Johannine Son of Man sayings is distinctly Johannine redaction or development of the Christian Son of Man tradition" (p. 90).

The term incarnation for Dunn means that Jesus revealed not just the Son of God, but that he actually revealed God. This is a statement consistent with classical orthodoxy. But Dunn's method of arriving at such a conclusion is unique to himself. He has attempted to strip himself of the Christological developments of the first five centuries which so greatly influence our reading of the NT. We are so accustomed to reading the Christological contexts of Scripture from a post-Chalcedon standpoint that to read the texts from the standpoint of the developing first century is very difficult to say the least. Dunn has attempted such a task and concluded that there is a vast diversity of Christological formulation. For those who may feel uncomfortable with such a great amount of diversity, he says, "Christology should not be narrowly confined to one particular assessment of Christ, nor should it insist on squeezing all the different NT conceptualizations into one particular 'shape,' but it should recognize that from the first, the significance of Christ could only be apprehended by a diversity of formulations which though not always strictly compatible with each other were not regarded as rendering each other invalid. . . . If the NT does serve as a norm, the truth of Christ will be found in the individual emphasis of the different NT formulations as much as in that which unites them" (p. 267).

This obviously helps us to see that it is difficult for one writer to paint the full picture of the infinite Christ. The Christ that we worship must be explained in diverse ways. Yet, I believe that there are possible texts in Romans, Philippians, and Hebrews that teach pre-existence. Dunn's discussions cover so much territory that the OT student will profit greatly from Dunn's OT exegesis, especially his discussion of the Son of Man in Daniel; the synoptic student will certainly appreciate the lengthy discussions of the Son of Man and the Son of God; and the Pauline specialist will definitely learn from the work regarding the Adamic and Wisdom Christologies.

Dunn sees the resurrection as the primary element in the Christology of the other NT writers, but he sees the incarnation and not the resurrection as the central theme of the Johannine corpus. Raymond Brown, who has contributed so much to Johannine scholarship over the past 25 years, would certainly agree with Dunn's conclusions. However, I see an emphasis upon the resurrection in the Johannine writings as well.

The book will be very instrumental in the areas of Christological studies and NT Biblical Theology for years to come. In my opinion, it surpasses some of the recent attempts on the subject such as Pannenberg's and Cullmann's. Yet, I was left uneasy with many of Dunn's conclusions. While I believe that through using the tools of historical criticism, Dunn has been

able to see the humanity of Christ and its development within the NT writings, I also believe that he has missed some of the meaning of the several Pauline passages, because he has not only borrowed the methodology of historical criticism (which in itself may be valid), but has also adopted many of the non-essential presuppositions that tend to accompany it. We agree with Bultmann at one place, that a person approaches the text with certain presuppositions (*Vorverständnis*). Dunn, however, seems to have abandoned certain presuppositions which are important to Evangelicalism, like the unity of the Scripture.

In the past decade, James Dunn has been at the forefront of Evangelical scholarship, but this work, along with *Unity and Diversity* . . . , indicate that Dunn is moving away from Evangelical circles. I hope that my assessment is wrong, for he has very much to offer us. This view in no way is meant to advocate a non-creative, stagnant Evangelicalism; nonetheless, an abandonment of such basics of the faith as the unity of the text is very dangerous. I still recommend this work very highly, although I suggest that the reader read cautiously and critically.

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*An Index to the Revised Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich Greek Lexicon, second edition*, by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker. Edited by John R. Alsop. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981. Pp. 525. \$10.95. Paper.

With the advent of the Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich Lexicon (BAG) in 1957, a new milestone had been reached in NT lexicography. BAG was the first comprehensive lexicon of the NT in English dress in over seventy years—the *only* comprehensive work since the revolution over the understanding of the language was effected by Deissmann. Eleven years after BAG was published, Alsop's *Index* was introduced. The format of the *Index* followed the sequence of the chapters and verses of the NT books. Listed under each verse were the Greek words (written in a computer transliterated Greek which took some getting used to) for which BAG cited that verse. For each Greek word, the page reference to BAG (and its particular quadrant) and the specific section and subsection were listed. The purpose of the *Index* was to help the translator/exegete save time by locating precisely where BAG dealt with the word in question as used in that verse. This not only helped him to translate more rapidly; it also helped the translator/exegete ascertain whether or not his text was cited by BAG and, if it was, to see what BAG stated as to the precise meaning of the word in that passage. The value of the *Index*, then, was intrinsically tied to the value of BAG's interpretations/definitions of words in their various contexts.

Although not infallible, BAG has been recognized as *the* lexical authority of the NT for the English-speaking community. Unfortunately, it was published one year before Bauer's fifth German edition. Most NT scholars have conceded that the English edition, based on Bauer's fourth German edition, held a deuterocanonical status. But with the advent of the revised BAG,

edited by Gingrich and Danker (thus, BAGD) in 1979, the English edition has been granted full canonical status.

This reviewer has anxiously awaited, therefore, the arrival of the new *Index* to this lexicon, secretly hoping, in fact, that the 'computer Greek' might be done away with, and the Greek text placed in its stead, in accord with the greater status of BAGD. He was not disappointed. The *Index* to BAGD is in a pleasing typeface with a readable Greek type (including accents and breathing marks). As well, it has retained the features of the first *Index* mentioned earlier.

A caution is in order, however, for the users of this *Index*. It is not designed to, nor can it, replace the lexicon itself. It should be used as a guide to BAGD, not as an independent tool. As well, since the interpretations/definitions of terms in specific passages given in BAGD are not inerrant, the wise exegete would not simply adopt their view. Rather, he would examine the field of meaning the word can have in the NT when there could be any doubt about BAGD's definition of the term in a given context. But the *Index* to BAGD now renders inexcusable any exegete's lexical decision which *overlooks* this lexicon's judgment. Used as it was intended, Alsop's *Index* to BAGD cannot help but make better exegetes of us all.

DANIEL B. WALLACE

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